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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

NOVEMBER 2012

COURTYARD GARDEN SPECIAL

Secrets of small spaces

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Insights from designer Arne Maynard

13 of the best climbers

Iford Manor

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on an English hillside

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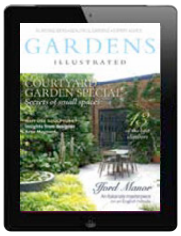
editor's letter

I'm conscious that I'm in the very fortunate position of getting to see hundreds of gardens each year. Many of them are vast, breathtakingly beautiful estates, labours of love that have taken at least one lifetime to achieve. Yet other gardens stand out for the clever use of limited space and resources. This issue we visit three courtyard gardens, each distinct in style yet all with the most remarkable ability to engender their visitors with a feeling of tranquillity (and two of them have heavy traffic rumbling close by). The use of sculptural elements in the garden is highly personal; often it feels misplaced, or superfluous, but it can also work extremely well. Designer Arne Maynard shares his thoughts on sculpture and why it is an important consideration and we also visit the studio of artist Patrick Haines, whose exquisite pieces are inspired by nature. My favourite gardens invariably feature clever planting schemes and this month we have lots of wonderful planting ideas, including Picton Garden's fabulous collection of asters, renowned nurseryman Bob Brown's favourite autumn crocus (colchicums), the best cornus stem colour for winter and unusual climbing plants.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Juliet



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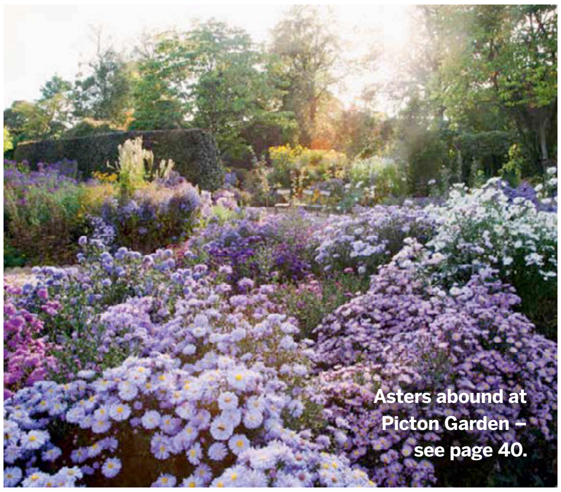

Asters abound at Picton Garden – see page 40.

Sculptor Patrick Haines finds inspiration in nature, on page 48.

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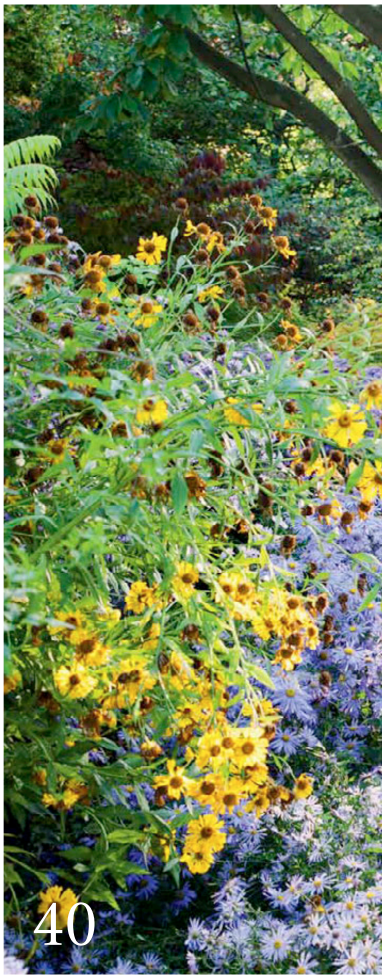

COVER IMAGE

The courtyard garden at Dan Pearson's studio. Photo by Rachel Warne. **See feature on page 32.**

on the cover

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HAROLD PETO Iford Manor stands as a monument to a design genius – see for yourself on page **66**

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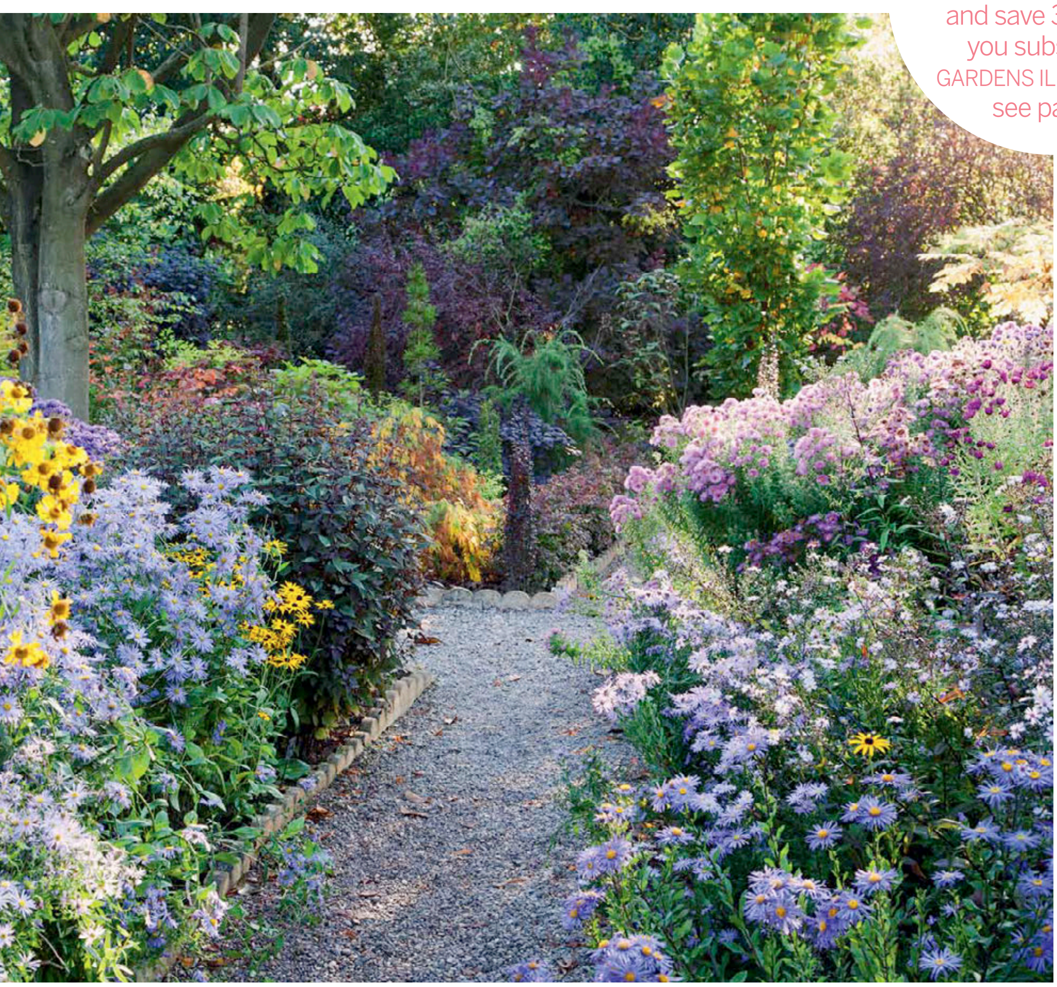

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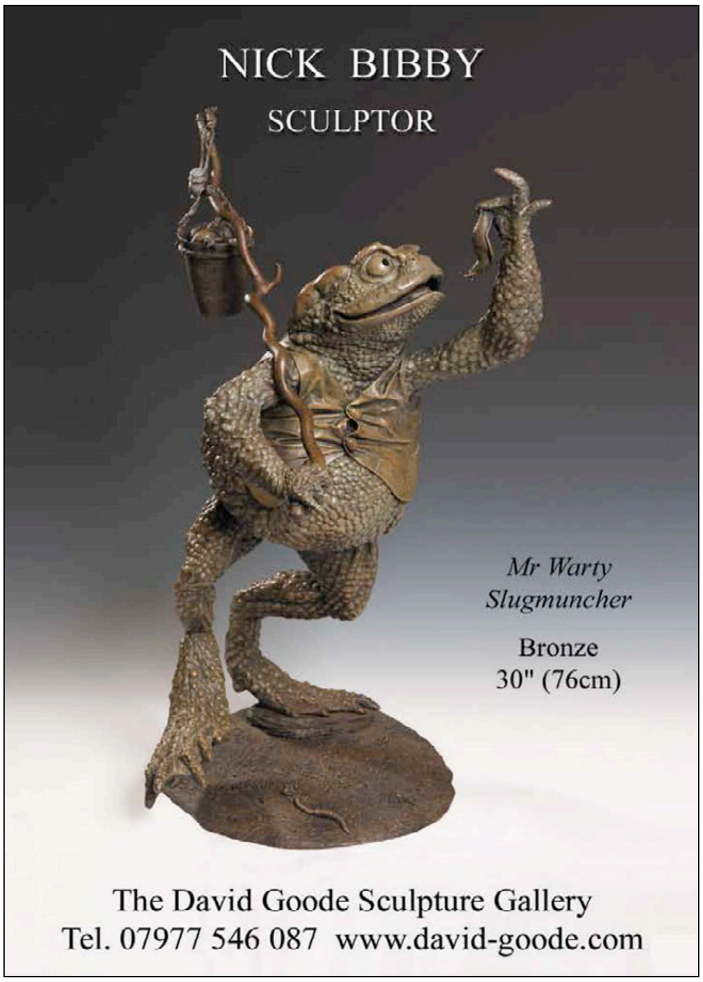
- Join our wonderful tour to see some of Japan's finest gardens – see page 17
- Subscribe today and choose a fabulous free gift* – see page 28

* Offer applies to UK customers only.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contributors

JASON LOWE

JOJO TULLOH

Jojo Tulloh writes about food and gardens, in particular cooking and growing in the heart of the city. Her book *The Modern Peasant* is out next year. On page 38 she visits a flamboyant and exotic courtyard garden on Battersea Rise.

"This is gardening as theatre; behind the wooden doors painted chocolate brown is a secret garden dancing with green light."

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

BOB BROWN

Bob Brown is an RHS trials judge and owns Cotswold Garden Flowers, a mecca for plant lovers, stocking a huge range of rare and beautiful plants. On 52 he focuses on colchicums, autumn-flowering favourites that look stunning in a crowd.

"I'm opinionated, which is important as a judge at the RHS garden plant trials. I also like to provoke."

WOLFGANG BOPP

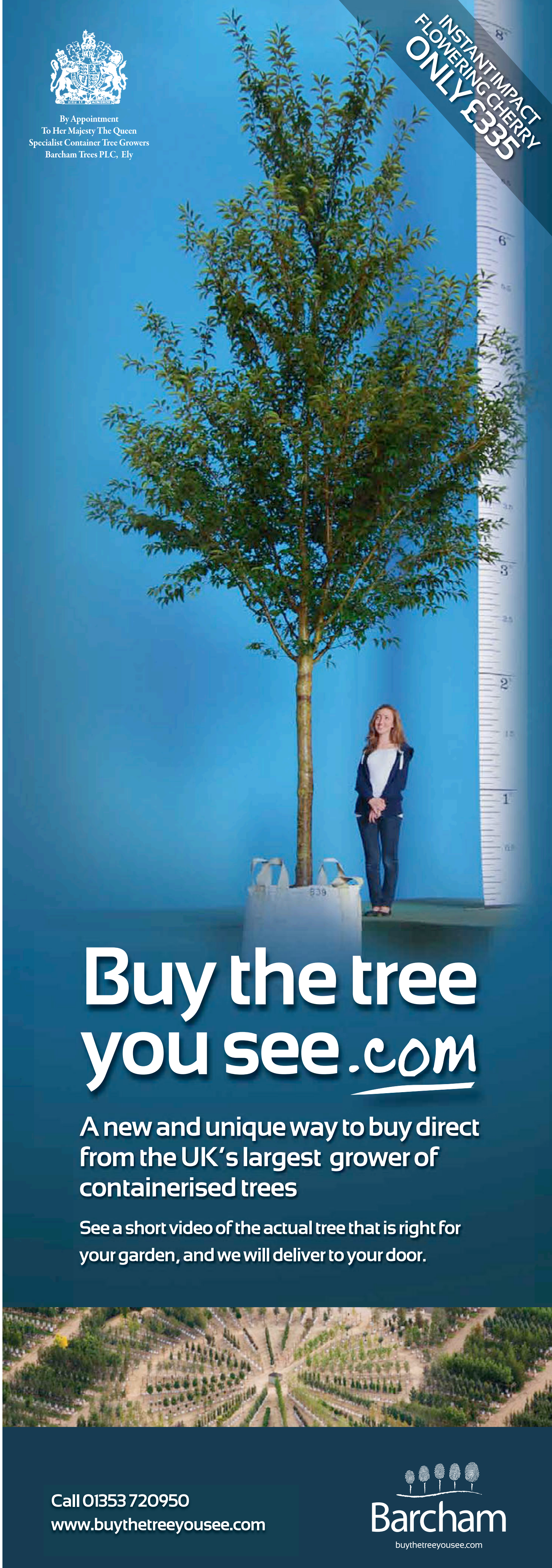
Wolfgang has spent over 20 years working with botanical plant collections, with both hardy and tender plants. For the past seven years he has worked at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in Hampshire. Go to page 74 to see his choice of the best cornus stems.

"Winter is such an important time to enjoy plants – what better way to brighten up the day?"

ABIGAIL REX

As a photographer, Abigail adores the challenge of capturing a set of images that express the vision of the gardener, and can transport the reader into the very heart of the garden itself. See her photographic skills at work on Picton Garden on page 40.

"The magic hit me the moment I walked through the gates to be greeted by a sea of blooms in perfect evening light."



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letters

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Star letter

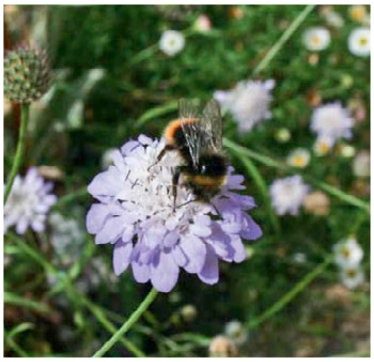
A gardener's life

Is gardening a proper job? [See September Talking Point, page 8.] I firmly believe it is. For my job I am a self-employed gardener. I love driving out to work knowing that I am going to make a difference for my customers' gardens.

Yes, my income is relatively low. But I take great pride in knowing that the gardens I have created make a difference to how people use and view their garden spaces. I particularly enjoy creating huge mixed shrub and herbaceous borders, and making gardens where there was just turf. I also gain great satisfaction from renovating long-lost and previously weedy gardens.

I am realistic in that I do look for alternative work for a couple of months of the year. But what inspires me most to make gardening my chosen job is my customers who trust my plant knowledge, garden design and practical horticultural skills.

I worked within the horticultural industry for ten years. I have a post-graduate diploma in landscape architecture. I taught horticulture at Wolverhampton City College, and ran community gardening projects. Of all these, my ongoing career as a gardener is definitely the most satisfying.
Sally Ellis, Shropshire



FLOWERS

Little Italy

I thought readers might like to see this London bee enjoying the flowers of *Cephalaria transylvanica*, grown from seed taken from my parents' garden in Le Marche, Italy.

I thought at first it was field scabious, but the spiky seed heads suggested otherwise. I finally identified it – it grew easily from seed and is now smothered in pale lilac pincushions which the insects love.

We also grew *Consolida regalis*, from seeds collected there – in Italy the flowers were blue but here they are a rich violet. And best of all, we now have a little corner of Italy in Stoke Newington.
Claire Usiskin, London

READER REACTION

Adoring dahlias

I am writing to thank you for the article in the September issue [page 48] about dahlias. Having grown dahlias for a few years, I broke my wrist and was out of the garden for four months, which meant the garden was a mess and I had to pay a landscape team to revamp it. Since then I have neglected my dahlias for other plants, and now have none.

I was only thinking the other day I wish I had some colourful dahlias in the garden again, and now I have read your article, I am definitely going to have to make room for a fresh selection. Every garden should have at least one dahlia, and I have never felt they were unfashionable. They are easy to grow, excellent for cutting, flower forever, and with so many cultivars you can't go wrong. I applaud your magazine for giving me plenty of gorgeous photographs, which I often attempt to emulate.
Rebecca Delaney, nr Preston

CORRECTION

In the September issue (page 87), we gave the wrong telephone number for Enviroden. It is 01328 878507.

WRITE TO US & WIN

The star letter wins a pair of Tobisho secateurs, worth £62. These award-winning Japanese pruners are hand-forged out of high-quality steel. For details visit www.niwaki.com

TALKING POINT

Matthew Oates considers an invasion from the continent.

Britain calls itself the slug capital of the world.

Certainly, 2012 is the year of the slug. The wet summer has led to slug pellet sales increasing by 74 per cent at one leading DIY chain. My local farm had to give up harvesting one August day because the machinery was, in the farmer's words, "slugged up"!

Recently, two giant species have sprung to prominence, as invaders from Spain. These have been named the Spanish stealth slug *Arion flagellus* and the Spanish slug *A. vulgaris*. The former has been here for some 40 years. The latter is a disturbing new arrival. It is one of the worst non-native species to have around as it eats anything and is a fast breeder.

We will not be able to eliminate these thugs and can aim only to control their worst excesses. A drought summer next year would help. My own garden solution? We keep free-ranging small breed ducks, and experience few slug problems.

Spanish slug *Arion vulgaris*.

Matthew Oates is an Advisor on Nature Conservation for the National Trust.

• What's your experience? Write to us by post or email (details above). We reserve the right to edit letters.

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Each break has a similar pattern, starting with a lunch together on the Friday and finishing late afternoon on the Sunday with two nights' accommodation, all meals and travel included.

For this first year we have chosen three quintessential garden locations: East Anglia (May), the Upper Cotswolds (June) and the Heart of Sussex (July).

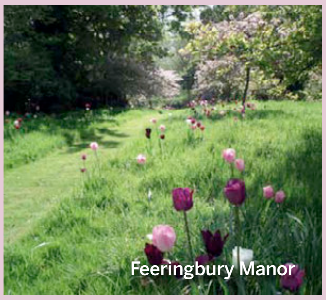
Special offer

Book more than one Ring O'Roses break within the same year and we will offer a discount of £50 per tour. So, if you book all 3 tours you make a saving of £150.

May

The dry gravel garden at the Beth Chatto Gardens.

Wyken Hall



Feeringbury Manor

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TOUR LEADER **Dr Noël Kingsbury**
Noël is a lecturer and planting designer, and is known internationally as a writer on plants and gardens. His work appears regularly in GARDENS ILLUSTRATED.

EXCLUSIVE WEEKEND GARDEN BREAKS

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Upton Wold

Kiftsgate

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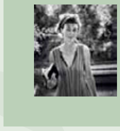
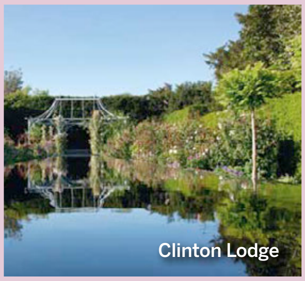


TOUR LEADER **Helena Attlee**
An acclaimed author on the culture and history of gardens both in this country and abroad, Helena has led numerous trips, lectured widely and contributes regularly to magazines.

July

Gravetye Manor, former home of naturalist gardener William Robinson.

Glyndebourne


Clinton Lodge

GARDENS OF THE HEART OF SUSSEX

Hosted by David Wheeler

12-14 July 2013

£998 per person

(with a single supplement of £100)

This is indeed a star-studded garden visiting experience, including guided tours to the gardens of Gravetye Manor, Glyndebourne and Great Dixter, as well as the delectable Clinton Lodge and dreamy Sussex Prairies, ending up with a chance to purchase wonderful plants at Marchants Hardy Plants. For this tour we are focusing on the heart of Sussex, including the wooded Weald and rolling Downlands but on one afternoon venture eastwards to Great Dixter for a special opening to include a meeting with head gardener Fergus Garrett. We have chosen Ockenden Manor Hotel a charming and tranquil Elizabethan Manor House, offering the very best of hospitality and cuisine recognised by AA and Michelin awards.

TOUR LEADER **David Wheeler**
David has a lifelong interest in plants, gardens and garden-making. He is editor of *Hortus* and *The Penguin Book of Garden Writing*. He gardens eight acres on the Welsh borders.

Booking details for Ring O' Roses garden breaks

For further information about these trips, day-to-day activities, hotel accommodation and details of how to book, please contact Boxwood Tours, Rhiw, Llanbedr, Gwynedd LL45 2NT, UK

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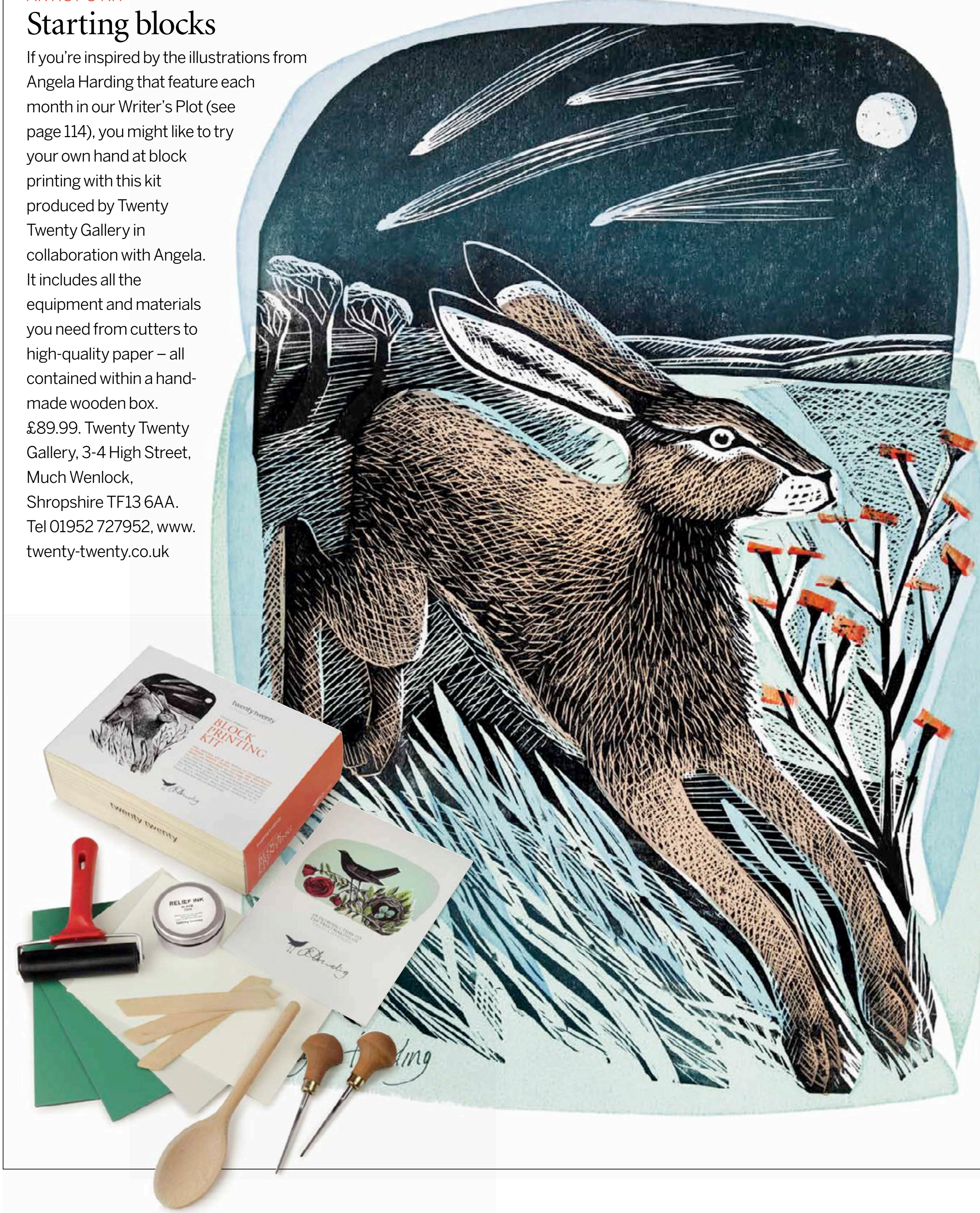
NEWS COMPILED BY SORREL EVERTON

ARTIST'S KIT

Starting blocks

If you're inspired by the illustrations from Angela Harding that feature each month in our Writer's Plot (see page 114), you might like to try your own hand at block printing with this kit produced by Twenty Twenty Gallery in collaboration with Angela. It includes all the equipment and materials you need from cutters to high-quality paper – all contained within a hand-made wooden box. £89.99. Twenty Twenty Gallery, 3-4 High Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire TF13 6AA. Tel 01952 727952, www.twenty-twenty.co.uk



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Elizabeth worries constantly about how she will feed her children

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"We don't know what we will eat tonight"

Right now, feeding her three children is a constant worry; there's only enough for one small meal a day and Elizabeth's youngest son, Stephen, has never known what it's like to have a full tummy.

Act now, before the short November rains

In Kenya, the best time of year for planting is just before the rains which are due in November. So the farmers there need seeds, now. Please reach out – one grower to another – and give £30 today, so that families like Elizabeth's can grow an acre and end their hunger. Thank you.

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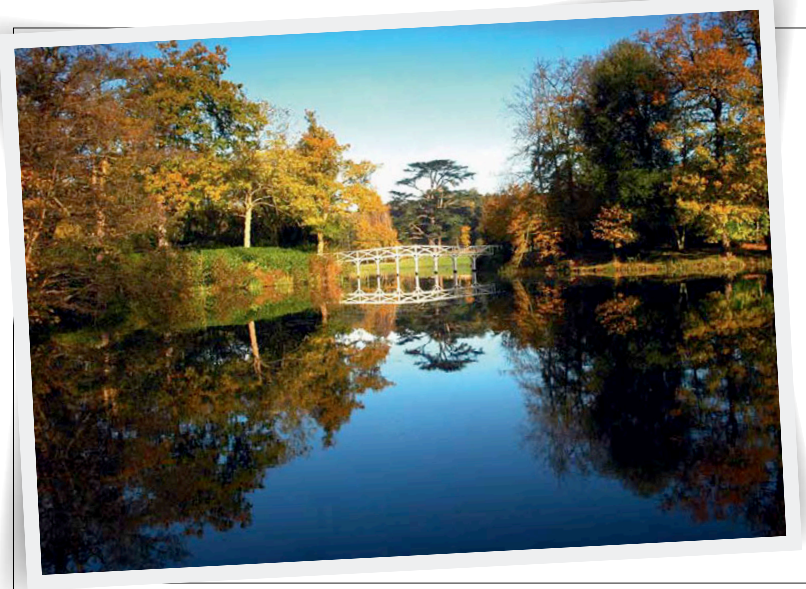


GARDEN VISIT

Painshill Park for free

The historic landscape garden of Painshill in Surrey is opening its gates for free every Wednesday this November. Enjoy the collections of maples, oaks and viburnums as part of autumn's finale.

Open 10.30am-4pm. Painshill, Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1JE. Tel 01932 868113, www.painshill.co.uk

WILDLIFE

Feed the birds

Summer and autumn harvests are down following the year's tricky growing conditions. It's also meant less berries and seeds in our hedgerows and fields for wildlife to forage. You can help by making sure bird feeders are kept topped up. Bird seed suppliers Nature's Feast have a new No Gro mix. It still provides a high energy feed from a selection of ten different seed suitable for a variety of wild birds – but with their husks removed and the seeds kibbled there isn't the frustration of dropped seed germinating in your garden. Available in 850g and 12.75kg bags. To find stockists call 08000 939 123.

GARDEN THEATRE

Get your allotment buzzing

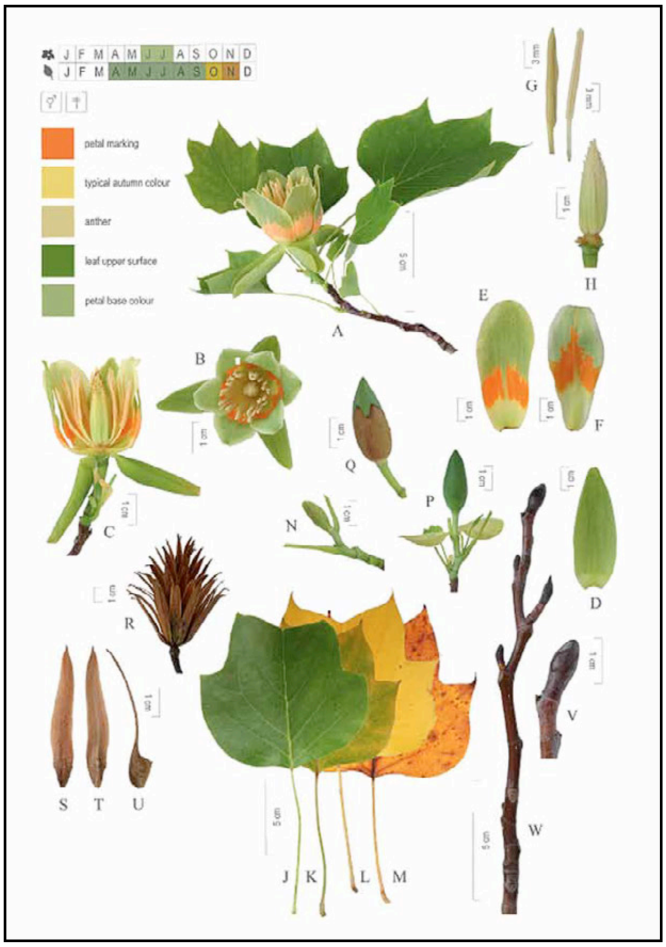
Calling all allotmenteers, beekeepers and garden society members! Include something a little different in your 2013 events listing by asking Mikron Theatre to come and perform for you. Following their successful tour of allotment sites this year, the company, known for bringing theatre to unusual locations, is looking for invitations from allotments or apiaries to stage their new play. 'Beyond the Veil' is a murder-mystery tale buzzing with intrigue and all things bee related, offering entertainment and education. To find out more and register your interest call 01484 843701, www.mikron.org.uk

EXHIBITION

Digital plants

Botanical art has long played an important role in our understanding of plants. The Royal Horticultural Society's Lindley Library brings the discipline right up to date with its exhibition of images by artist Niki Simpson. Her digital botanical illustrations combine the scientific standards of traditional artwork with photographic realism to give us a clear and informative look at a plant's defining characteristics.

Until 9 December. Lindley Library, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 212428, www.rhs.org.uk



JULIAN FAULKNER, NIKI SIMPSON

NOSEY PARKER

Quizzing interesting people in the world of gardens

Matthew Hall

Batsford Arboretum's head gardener is hoping for a good display of autumn colours this year.

What was your first gardening job? While studying at Pershore, I also worked at the historic gardens **Coughton Court in Warwickshire**. I became head gardener at Batsford by the age of 22.

Who or what has inspired your career the most? I'm inspired by lots of people and open to ideas from any member of the team. If you remain positive, there's nothing you can't achieve.

What's the best gardening tip you were ever given? When it comes to identifying trees, always look down rather than up. Noticing the bark and the leaves on the ground is sometimes the best clue to what type of tree it is.

Name some landscapes or gardens you have found particularly inspiring. As an arboretum we have links with Howick Hall in Northumberland and Hergest Croft in Herefordshire. Both inspirational collections grown in challenging conditions.

What's your favourite autumn tree at Batsford? The cercidiphyllums for their scent and colour. We have trees that are over 50 years old and turn a wonderful flame orange.

What other autumn highlights are there at Batsford? The acers and sorbus are impressive and we've just completed a visitor centre with shop, café and garden centre.

Can you give us a quick background to the arboretum? There's been a garden here for years. Back in the 19th century the first Lord Redesdale favoured a wild garden with a Japanese feel to some areas as influenced by his attaché days. After years of neglect the collection was consolidated by the second Lord Dulverton, who added more specimens and really raised the profile as an arboretum following the Second World War.

What gardening tool would you never be without? Our **John Deere Gator** – it's a utility vehicle that we load up with all our kit to drive round the 60 or so acres.

Not a lot of people know this about me... I used to be a keen runner and have recently started up again. I just ran 7½ miles this weekend!

Batsford Arboretum is open every day of the year, except Christmas Day, with spectacular autumn displays at this time of year. Also look out for their events throughout the season such as the Fungi Foray on 3 November (£4 including free admission). Tel 01386 701441, www.batsarb.co.uk

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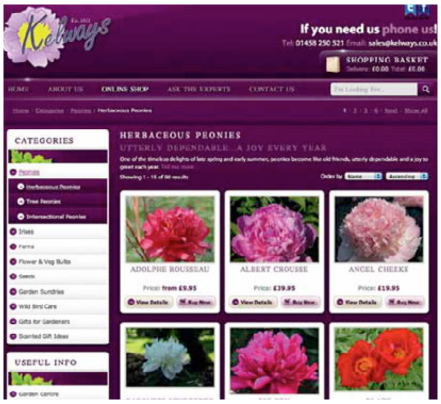
WEBSITE

Expert advice

Take a look at plant nursery Kelways' improved website to find out more, not just about their award-winning range of peonies (always hard to resist), but also their selection of roses, seed and growing collection of hardy garden ferns. The 'Ask the Experts' section allows you to put forward a query, plus their advice for peonies, irises and ferns gives you insights into successful growing. www.kelways.co.uk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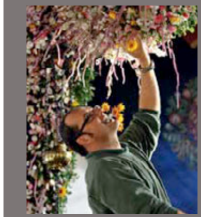
Diary

- **Wild food foraging** Thom Hunt from Channel 4's *Hugh's Three Hungry Boys* leads a walk round Heligan's hedgerows and woodlands to forage for dinner. £20. 11am and also at 1.30pm. The day continues with a 'Taste of Heligan' supper, £18.50 for two courses, and £22.50 for three courses. 8 November. Booking essential. Lost Gardens of Heligan, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 6EN. Tel 01726 845100, www.heligan.com

- **Making the Cotehele garland** Join the team in helping to make the 18-metre-long flower garland to run the length of the hall at Cotehele House. 9-23 November, 11am-4pm. Free event (normal admission applies). Cotehele, St Dominick, Saltash, Devon PL12 6TA. Tel 01579 351346, www.nationaltrust.org.uk



- **Compost Clinic** Learn how to create compost and about all the beneficial creatures involved. 14 November, 10am-12.30pm. £25. Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS. Tel 020 7349 6471, www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

- **Whichford Pottery annual sale** Discounts on all pots plus winter planting ideas, guest speaker Chris Beardshaw (17 & 18 December). Sale runs 16 November-9 December, 10am-5pm. Whichford Pottery, Nr Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire CV36 5PG. Tel 01608 684416, www.whichfordpottery.com

- **Growing apples, pears, plums and cherries** This course covers everything – selecting varieties, general care, pests, diseases and pruning. 17 November, 9am-5pm, from £96. West Dean, Nr Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ. Tel 0844 499 4408, www.westdean.org.uk

THROCKMORTON ESTATES, JOHN DEERE, CHRIS SAVILLE / NATIONAL TRUST

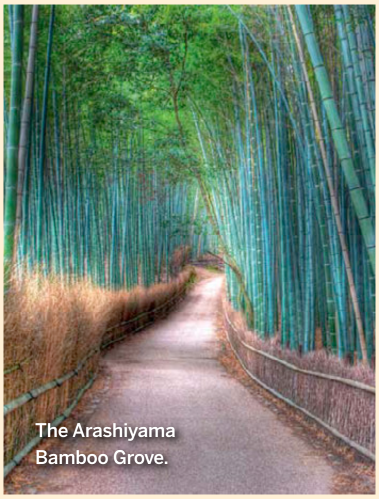
EXCLUSIVE READER HOLIDAY

JAPAN READER HOLIDAY

Discover the tranquil beauty and rich autumn colours of Kyoto and its surrounding garden attractions, **12-23 November 2013**

Come with us to Japan next autumn, when colours blaze across the forested hills surrounding the city. We will arrive in Kyoto in time to celebrate *Momijigari*, the autumn-leaf-viewing festival that unfolds in the city's parks and gardens. The journey will take us to many of Kyoto's fascinating temple gardens, including Saiho-ji, where only a scattering of carefully chosen leaves from ancient trees will be allowed to settle on the electric-green moss, and Kinkaku-ji (the Golden Pavilion), a gilded palace floating in a maze of elegant ponds and islands.

There will be time to experience Kyoto's wonderful restaurants and we'll be sure to taste the beautiful *kyogashi*, 'Kyoto sweets,' made especially for the autumn festival. We will stroll through the famous bamboo groves of Arashiyama and drift gently down the Hozu river. And for those who want to relax Japanese style, we'll find an *onsen*, a hot spring in the hills or walk along quiet country lanes among terraced fields and old farm villas. There will also be visits to the major gardens of Tokyo and Nara.


The Arashiyama Bamboo Grove.

TOUR LEADER HELENA ATTLEE

Helena is a garden writer who approaches her subjects through cultural history and biography. She is an experienced tour leader who has already accompanied GARDENS ILLUSTRATED readers on other tours. She is the author of several books about gardens – including *The Gardens of Japan* (2010). Helena is a fellow of the Royal Literary Fund and is writer in residence at the University of Worcester.

Autumn colours at the Ryoan-ji temple.

MALCOLM FAIRMAN / ALAMY; ASIA IMAGES GROUP PTE LTD / ALAMY; SCOTSTOCK / ALAMY

Sanzenin temple, in the rural town of Ohara.

BOOKING DETAILS

The tour price is £3,760 per person (not including return flights from London). For more information about the trip, accommodation arrangements, day-to-day activities, and how to book, contact Distant Horizons, 13 Melloncroft Drive, Caldy, The Wirral CH48 2JA, UK.

TEL **+44 (0)151 635 3425**
EMAIL **info@distanthorizons.co.uk**
WEBSITE **www.distanthorizons.co.uk**

This tour is organised exclusively for readers of GARDENS ILLUSTRATED by Distant Horizons

Taxodium distichum

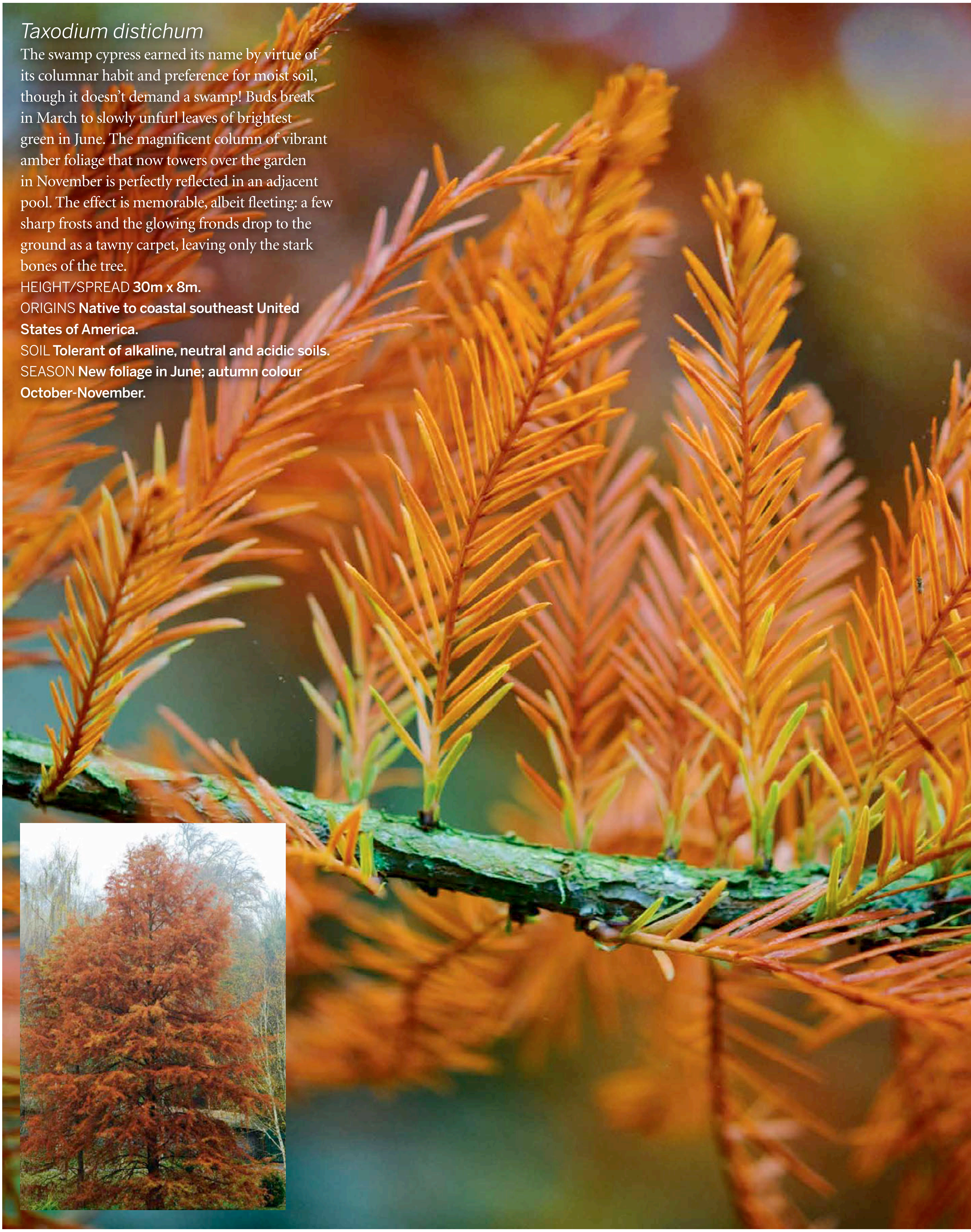
The swamp cypress earned its name by virtue of its columnar habit and preference for moist soil, though it doesn't demand a swamp! Buds break in March to slowly unfurl leaves of brightest green in June. The magnificent column of vibrant amber foliage that now towers over the garden in November is perfectly reflected in an adjacent pool. The effect is memorable, albeit fleeting: a few sharp frosts and the glowing fronds drop to the ground as a tawny carpet, leaving only the stark bones of the tree.

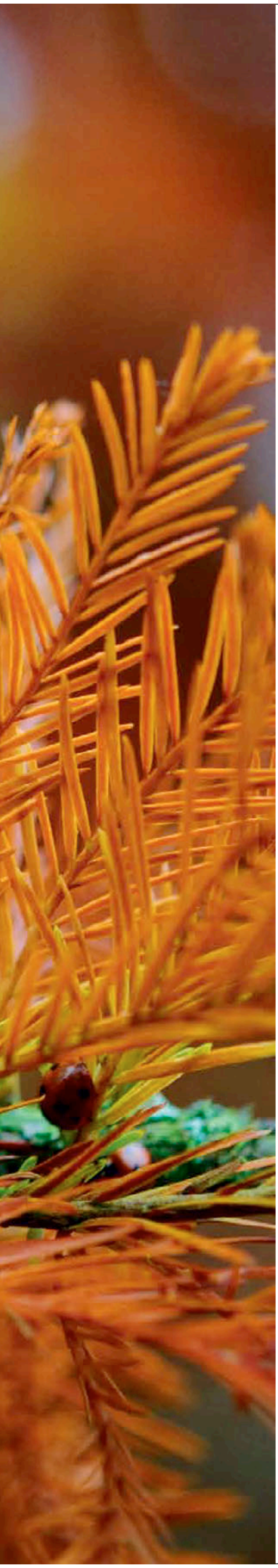
HEIGHT/SPREAD **30m x 8m.**

ORIGINS **Native to coastal southeast United States of America.**

SOIL **Tolerant of alkaline, neutral and acidic soils.**

SEASON **New foliage in June; autumn colour October-November.**





November plants

Nine plants to add colour, form and fauna to your borders as you snuggle down and prepare for colder months ahead

WORDS CHRIS MARCHANT PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

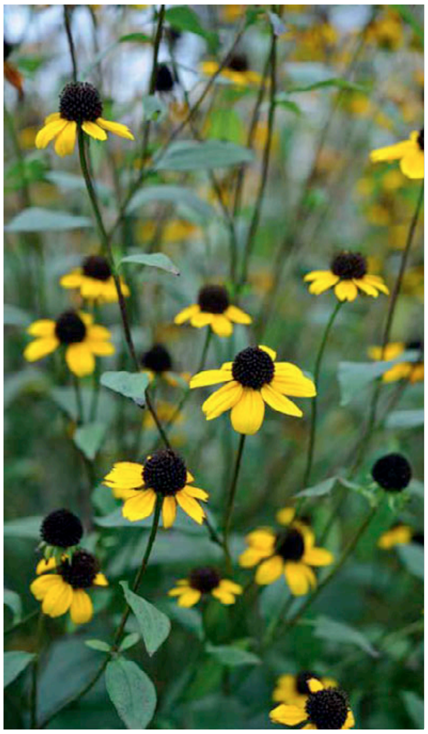
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

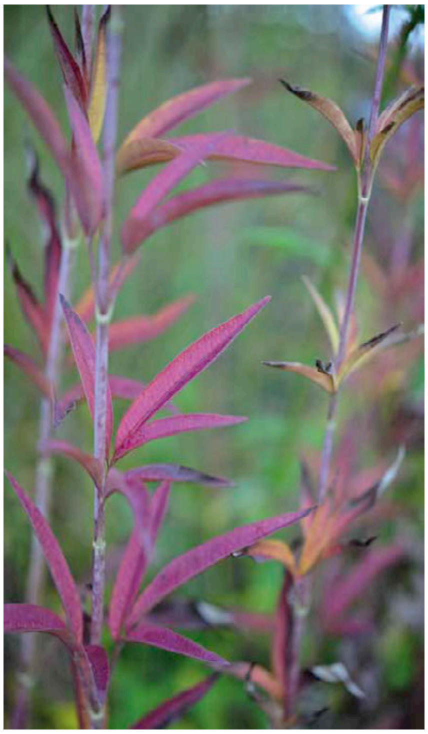
Chris Marchant is co-owner of Orchard Dene Nurseries in Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, a wholesale grower specialising in hardy herbaceous plants.

Rudbeckia triloba

I would urge any who spurn yellow flowers to take a second look at this member of the *Rudbeckia* family. This is one plant I use regularly which does need artificial support. Individual small flowers have golden petals clustered around a chocolate brown cone. As main stems divide and subdivide like a giant aorta, the sheer number of flowers terminating each stem can make things top-heavy. The solution is to grow through hazel cages, which quickly disappear beneath foliage and flower. The golden floral display is not deterred by frosts and remains radiant well into November.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 120cm x 65cm.
ORIGINS North America.
SOIL Any well-drained loam.
SEASON September-November.

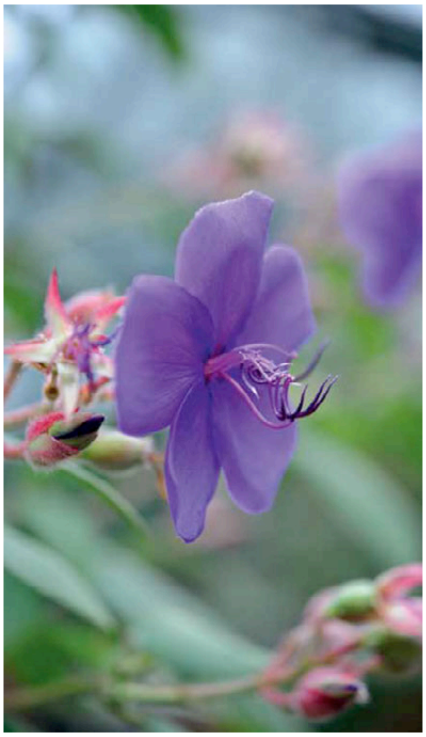




Coreopsis tripteris

A wiry and unassuming plant that scarcely warrants attention for the first eight months of the year. But then all changes in September and October when shortening days coax the foliage into more flamboyant autumn attire of gold and burgundy, and the ever-extending stems finally yield up a vivid yellow bloom. Each flower is relatively small, so the intensity of colour is perfectly balanced by generous proportions of foliage. The slender upright form is ideal for threading among *Miscanthus* grasses, which offer the token support needed to prevent collapse.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 200cm x 50cm.
ORIGINS From eastern USA.
SOIL Free-draining garden loam, best protected from full sun in woodland edge conditions.
SEASON Late August-October.



Tibouchina urvilleana

Keeping a stand of these in large containers on the terrace creates an illusion that summer lingers on, even if this does demand judicious wheeling in and out of the barn to protect against night frost. The deeply furrowed leaves have beautiful silvered undersides which contrast with the rash of red hairs on each stem. Branches are crowned with plentiful saucer-shaped flowers in magnificent papal purple, each boasting a prominent centre of corkscrew stamens.

HEIGHT/SPREAD Grown each year to 200cm x 75cm, though capable of far more without frost.

ORIGINS Native to Brazil.

SOIL Moisture-retentive, well-nourished soil

SEASON In tropical homelands, the plant flowers continuously. In the UK, flowers are checked by winter frosts.

Matteuccia struthiopteris

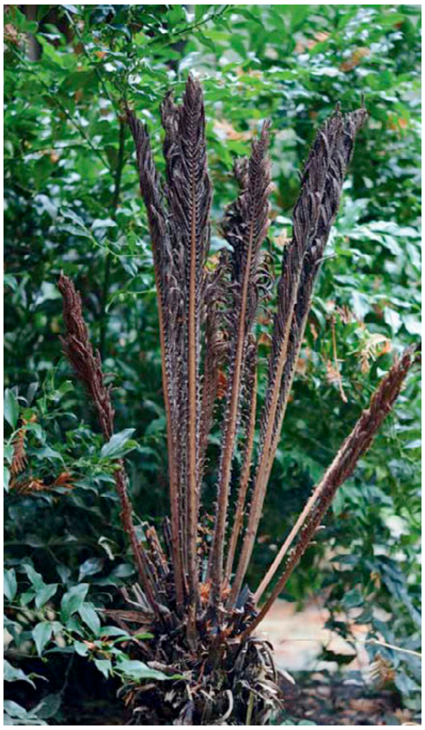
The fresh beauty of unfolding ferns in the spring is unchallenged; later in the year the shuttlecock fern reveals darker charms. December herbaceous colour spectrums narrow to shades of gold and brown, yet textures remain evident and plentiful. The fruiting bodies of a mature *Matteuccia* appear as deep chocolate brown fronds, stiffly assembled in the centre of each shuttlecock structure. When green elements of the fern collapse, selective pruning of old foliage offers up a whole new perspective. Velvet textured seed heads carry their display to the end of the year.

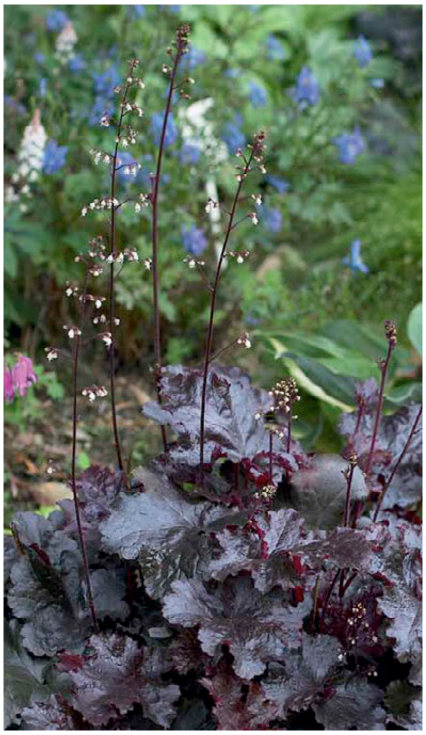
HEIGHT/SPREAD Fertile fronds 80cm x 50cm; foliage tends to grow taller.

ORIGINS Native across Europe.

SOIL Moisture-retentive soil in shade.

SEASON Foliage from April, fruiting bodies in October-November.





VISIONS / GAP PHOTOS

Heuchera 'Dark Beauty'

Plant breeders have demonstrated great tenacity in their quest to produce ever more colourful and exciting heucheras. While plants of this genus have a relatively short life, their flower and foliage effects during that span is such that they deserve recognition. I struggle to appreciate some of the more fantastical colours available but do enjoy the dark burgundy foliage afforded by this form. Textural detail is enhanced by the crimped edges of each leaf. A few stems of the airy flower heads make a perfect table posy, mixed with the odd sprig of almost any berried shrub.

HEIGHT/SPREAD 50cm x 35cm.

ORIGINS Species native to western North America.

SOIL Humus-rich soil in light shade.

SEASON Flowers June onwards, foliage through until November.

Places to visit

Chris Marchant names some of her favourite gardens and other places to see plants at their best.

With many trees now devoid of leaves, November encourages better appreciation of ornamental tree barks and silhouettes. The **Sir Harold Hillier Gardens** incorporates a magnificent arboretum with comprehensive labelling of mature and young specimens. The Winter Garden, close to the Visitor Pavilion, contains over 650 different plants selected for their seasonal winter effect. There are also tea rooms, a shop, and space for exhibition events throughout the year. Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Jermyns Lane, Ampfield, Romsey, Hants SO51 0QA. Tel 01794 369317, www3.hants.gov.uk/hilliergardens

Shirley Sherwood Gallery at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

VIEW PICTURES LTD / ALAMY

If the weather drives you inside, consider a visit to the **Shirley Sherwood Gallery**

Impatiens sodenii

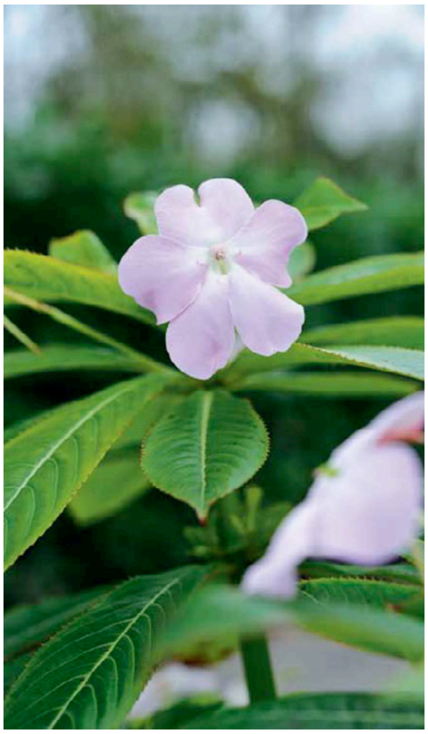
Though related, this plant has little in common with the demure and tidy 'bizzy Lizzy' of window boxes. As a frost-tender shrub, we selected it to extend the floral display in a shady spring garden. Young plants, bedded out in May, grew sturdy and branched to around 70cm tall. A plethora of shell-pink, spurred flowers, around 5cm across, gave continuous display through summer and well into autumn, ceasing only when sharp frosts took their toll. Late summer cuttings can be overwintered with protection for procurement of next year's display.

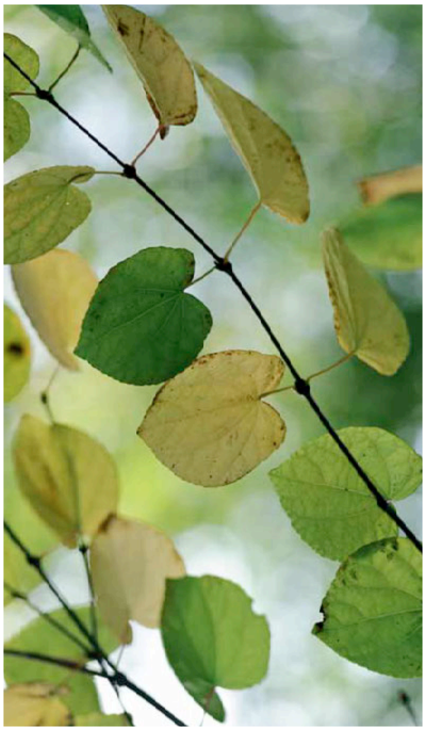
HEIGHT/SPREAD Commonly 70cm x 60cm, can reach over 150cm in tropical climates.

ORIGINS Tropical east African Highlands.

SOIL Moisture-retentive garden loam.

SEASON August-December, depending on frosts.





Cercidiphyllum japonicum

The light pyramidal profile of this tree gives plenty of scope to install a pleasing understorey of mixed woodland planting. While the *Cercidiphyllum* is taken up with production of rather dull little flowers in the spring, distractions of *Helleborus* and *Pulmonaria* work their magic. At the other end of the year, shortening days and colder nights advance autumnal colouring and observers are treated to leaves of luminous golden yellow. A chemical reaction within the leaf structure exudes a delicious smell of caramelised sugar. Anyone for waffles?

HEIGHT/SPREAD 15-20m x 8-12m.

ORIGINS From southern Japan, Sichuan and western China.

SOIL Deep, fertile soil, sheltered position.

SEASON Glorious foliage from October until November. Spring frosts damage new foliage, but a second flush should ensue.

Salvia guaranitica 'Black and Blue'

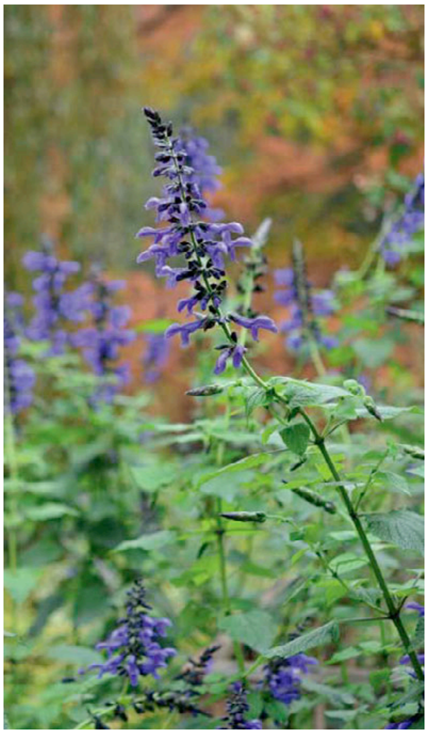
To achieve a full display of these late-flowering salvia flowers in November requires a fine summer and a mild, frost-free autumn. Inky purple flowers present in classic hooded structure, contrasted by generous felted foliage. However, perched aloft stems of nearly 3m tall they are sadly beyond easy appreciation. By planting out on rich, moist ground alongside a pool, and training up bamboo supports to reach a cantilevered balcony, we have found a way of admiring the magnificent blooms face to face.

HEIGHT/SPREAD Depending on treatment and conditions, but potentially up to 280cm x 100cm.

ORIGINS South America

SOIL Deep, well-nourished soil.

SEASON August-November.

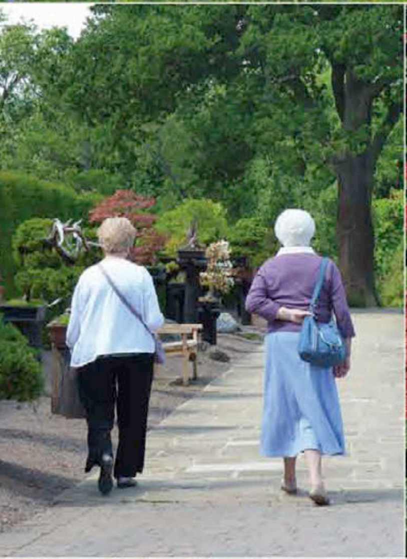


situated in Kew Gardens. This is the first gallery in the world dedicated to botanical art and includes 200,000 works by artists dating from the 18th century to modern times: truly a glorious celebration of the natural beauty of plants. Botanical art prints from Kew's collection are available to buy through Kew's online print shop. Shirley Sherwood Gallery, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey TW9 3AB. Tel 020 8332 3622, www.kew.org

The medieval manor house of **Dartington Hall** was given a new lease of life by the American philanthropists Leonard and Dorothy Elmhurst who employed a succession of designers to enhance the garden's potential. Nestled against a sheltering combe, the house looks into an ancient tiltyard, where green terraces frame a perfect lawn. Artfully positioned cedar trees, a procession of Irish yews and a magnificent Henry Moore reclining statue compose the space nearest the house. A triumph of design. Open all year, but check for details. Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EL. Tel 01803 847058, www.dartingtonhall.com

Dartington Hall, near Totnes in Devon.

JASON INGRAM



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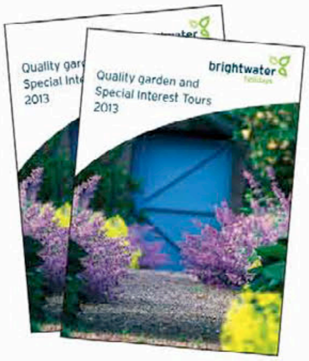

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Cool and calm

This is a quiet time in the garden, lacking urgency: gentle pottering in thick jumpers and sharp, low sunlight. There are only the hardiest of harvests still to bring in, and mainly dried and preserved fruits and vegetables to eat

WORDS **LIA LEENDERTZ** ILLUSTRATION **GEORGINA LUCK**

PRACTICAL JOB

Sow broad beans

Pick the right, hardy varieties and you can sow direct into the ground now, and theoretically have earlier beans than you would get from spring sowings. In a hard winter this sometimes doesn't work out, and it is a good idea to cover the sowings with pinned-down fleece to keep off the worst of the weather, and to make back up spring sowings too. 'Aquadulce Claudia' (sometimes known as just 'Aquadulce') is one of the hardiest and a good choice for autumn sowing, but last year I also tried field bean 'Wizard' from Real Seeds, www.realseeds.co.uk. It produces smaller pods almost filled with blocky beans, so the yield ends up similar to larger podded beans. It is particularly hardy and early.

THINGS TO DO

If you haven't got much time, just do these essential tasks…

Collect fallen leaves and put them into bin bags or a chicken wire bin for leaf mould in a year.

Lift dahlia tubers, brush them clean and store in sawdust or dry compost in a frost-free place.

Sow sweet pea seeds in a greenhouse or cold frame for early summer flowers.

Plant new rhubarb now or divide old clumps to keep them productive and bulky.

THREE OF THE BEST

Kales

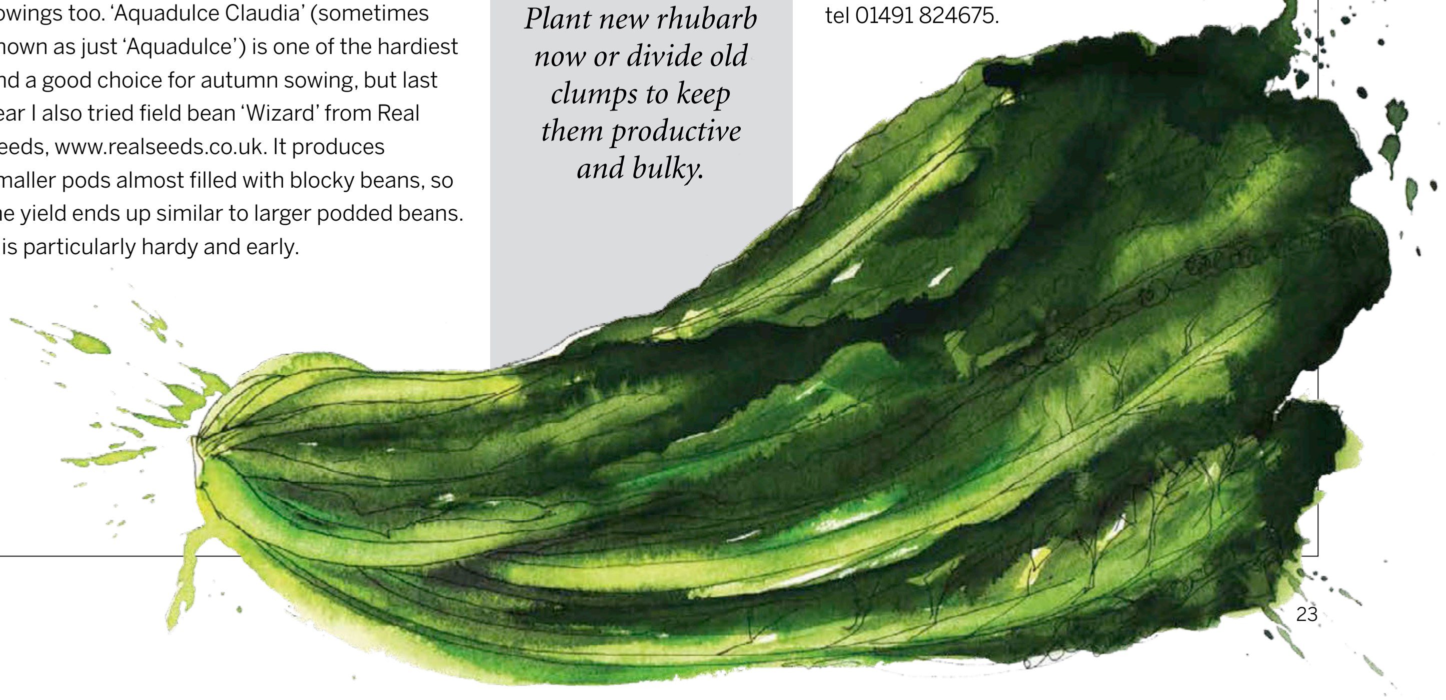
Of all the troublesome cabbage family the kales are the least demanding. Almost all others must be swathed in mesh netting all year round to avoid the slings and arrows of brassica pests, but kales can do without – extra good news as they look so great in the vegetable garden in winter. Here are three you could be picking throughout the cold months. Sow them next July.

Nero de Toscana (see below)
Huge and beautiful plants, one of the most striking of all vegetables, with large and puckered arching, near-black leaves. Tasty too.

Red Russian
Grey-blue leaves and a distinctive purple midrib, this is one of the sweetest and mildest of kales, and very pretty.

Dwarf Green Curled
Looking like dense curled parsley, Dwarf Green Curled will stand up to the worst that winter can throw at it. The best of the lot for an unsheltered, inhospitable spot.

All from www.chilternseeds.co.uk, tel 01491 824675.

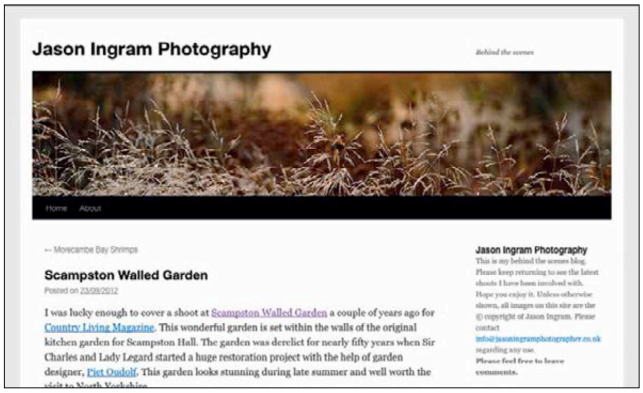


READ THIS

Jason Ingram photography

http://jasoningramphotography.wordpress.com/

Jason Ingram is a garden and food photographer whose work regularly appears in magazines – including GARDENS ILLUSTRATED – and books. He makes it all look so easy, and this 'behind the scenes' blog gives a little glimpse into some of the work involved in creating that illusion. Sometimes he is to be found waiting in the cold at 5am for sunlight to hit windows in just the right way, others slogging up and down the motorway as he gets a call from a nursery that a particular cultivar is suddenly flowering. He often posts pictures before they've appeared anywhere else, as well as those that the magazines haven't been able to fit in. A fascinating peek behind the images.



← Morecambe Bay Shrimps

Scampston Walled Garden

Posted on 23/09/2012

I was lucky enough to cover a shoot at Scampston Walled Garden a couple of years ago for Country Living Magazine. This wonderful garden is set within the walls of the original kitchen garden for Scampston Hall. The garden was derelict for nearly fifty years when Sir Charles and Lady Legard started a huge restoration project with the help of garden designer, Piet Oudolf. This garden looks stunning during late summer and well worth the visit to North Yorkshire

Jason Ingram Photography

This is my behind the scenes blog. Please keep returning to see the latest shoots I have been involved with. Hope you enjoy it. Unless otherwise shown, all images on this site are the © copyright of Jason Ingram. Please contact info@jasoningramphotographer.co.uk regarding any use. Please feel free to leave comments.

PRACTICAL JOB

Get pots ready for winter

Huddle terracotta pots together to help them make it unscathed through winter. Wet soil expands when frozen, and causes pots to crack. You can wrap them in bubblewrap to insulate them against frost, but it's not the loveliest of looks. Lifting on pot feet over winter helps excess water to drain, and the huddle keeps them cosier than they would be alone.

ONE TO MAKE

Baked borlotti beans

Borlotti beans left to dry on the plant can be harvested now, popped out of their pods, and stored in glass jars where they will look beautiful all winter until you turn them into an upmarket version of the humble baked bean. Takes 10 minutes to prepare, 2½-3 hours to cook, plus standing and overnight soaking

INGREDIENTS

Serves 8

400g dried borlotti beans
3 bay leaves
Small bunch dried thyme
3 garlic cloves
3 tbsp olive oil
2 onions, diced
150g smoked streaky bacon, finely chopped
1 can chopped tomatoes
2 tbsp muscovado sugar
3 tbsp cider vinegar

- Soak the beans overnight in a large pan of water, then in the morning drain, put back in the pan, cover with plenty of fresh water and bring to the boil, adding the whole garlic cloves, bay leaves, and thyme. They will be tender after 45 minutes to one hour. Leave them in the water for an extra 30 minutes after removing from the heat, then drain, reserving the garlic cloves and discarding the herbs.
- Heat the oil in a large saucepan and add the onions and bacon, cooking until the onions are translucent and the bacon crispy. Squeeze the garlic cloves out of their wrappers and into the pot and mix in, then add the tomatoes, sugar, vinegar and 400ml water. Once everything has come to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 1½ to 2 hours, stirring occasionally to prevent it from sticking to the base.

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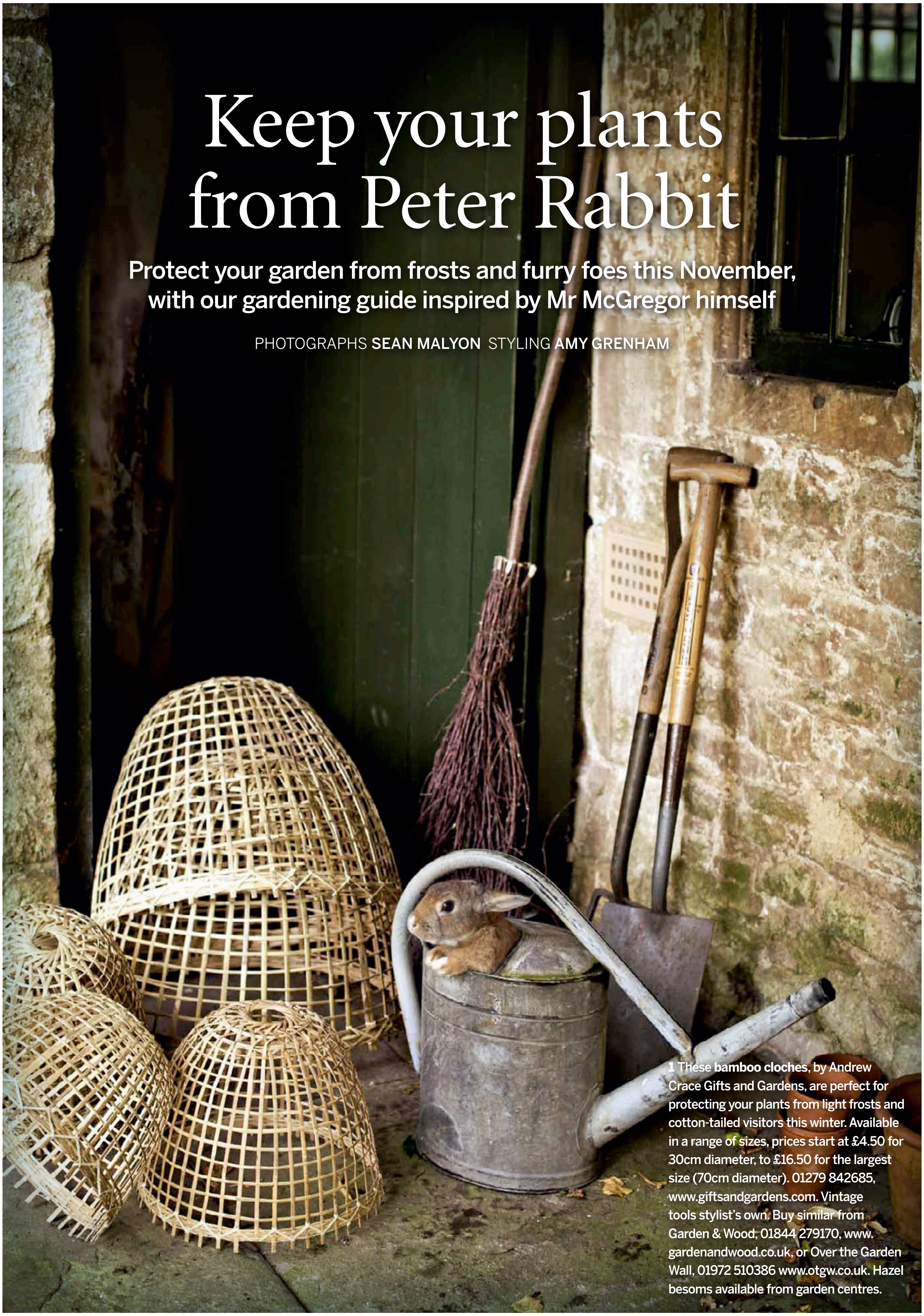
Keep your plants from Peter Rabbit

Protect your garden from frosts and furry foes this November, with our gardening guide inspired by Mr McGregor himself

PHOTOGRAPHS **SEAN MALYON** STYLING **AMY GRENHAM**



1 These **bamboo cloches**, by Andrew Crace Gifts and Gardens, are perfect for protecting your plants from light frosts and cotton-tailed visitors this winter. Available in a range of sizes, prices start at £4.50 for 30cm diameter, to £16.50 for the largest size (70cm diameter). 01279 842685, www.giftsandgardens.com. Vintage tools stylist's own. Buy similar from Garden & Wood, 01844 279170, www.gardenandwood.co.uk, or Over the Garden Wall, 01972 510386 www.otgw.co.uk. Hazel besoms available from garden centres.

SHOT ON LOCATION, WITH KIND PERMISSION, AT TORMARTON COURT. PETER RABBIT LOANED BY BOARDING BUNNIES AT HOME, BRISTOL

2 Protect your seedlings in style. These **high barn cloches** are constructed from a wire frame, and are designed to hold four panes of 3mm horticultural glass. £12 each cloche, not including glass, from Hibbitt of Oswestry, 01691 656152, www.hibbitt.co.uk. **Bamboo plant tunnels** are available in lengths of 90cm and 1 metre, prices from £18.50, from Andrew Crace Gifts and Gardens, as before. Blue **moleskin blazer**, £79, from Boden, 0844 873 0000, www.boden.co.uk. Long-handled **stainless steel trowel**, £46.32, 01751 417351, www.lazydogtools.co.uk

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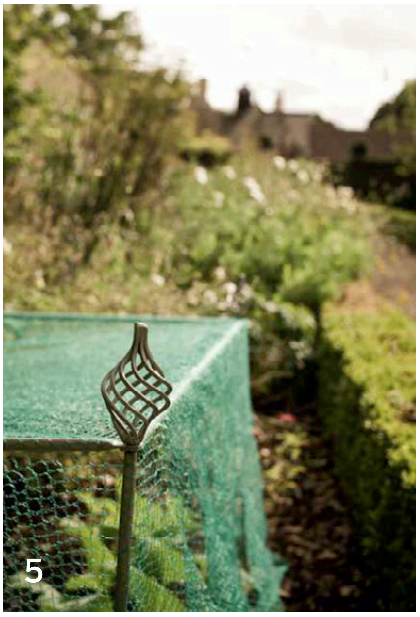
3 **Wire cloches** will keep hungry young rabbits and other visitors at bay. The spiked feet hold the cover in place. £15.99 each from Crocus, 0844 557 2244, www.crocus.co.uk. Garden hand fork, stylist's own.

4 Protect plants from the cold. **Fleece** options at Suttons Seeds start at £8.99 a roll. **Enviromesh** also gives some frost protection, prices starting at £16.99 a roll, 0844 922 2899, www.suttons.co.uk. Large **Easy Fleece Jacket** can be placed over larger plants, £5.99 for two, from Haxnicks. More details at www.haxnicks.co.uk. Basket and scissors stylist's own.

5 This **Elegance Crop Cage** is easily assembled from powder coated steel poles, covered with net and held in place with decorative finial. Comes in a range of sizes, starting with the base unit £69, Agriframes, 0845 260 4450, www.agriframes.co.uk.

6 Keep warm in the garden Mr McGregor style, in this **waxed cotton jerkin**, £110, Carrier Company, 01328 820699, www.carriercompany.co.uk. Victorian **glass cloches** available in a range of sizes, starting at £24, from Hibbitt of Oswestry, as before, or try Haxnicks for similar. Galvanised metal and glass **growhouse** comes in a set of two, £129.99, from Crocus as before.



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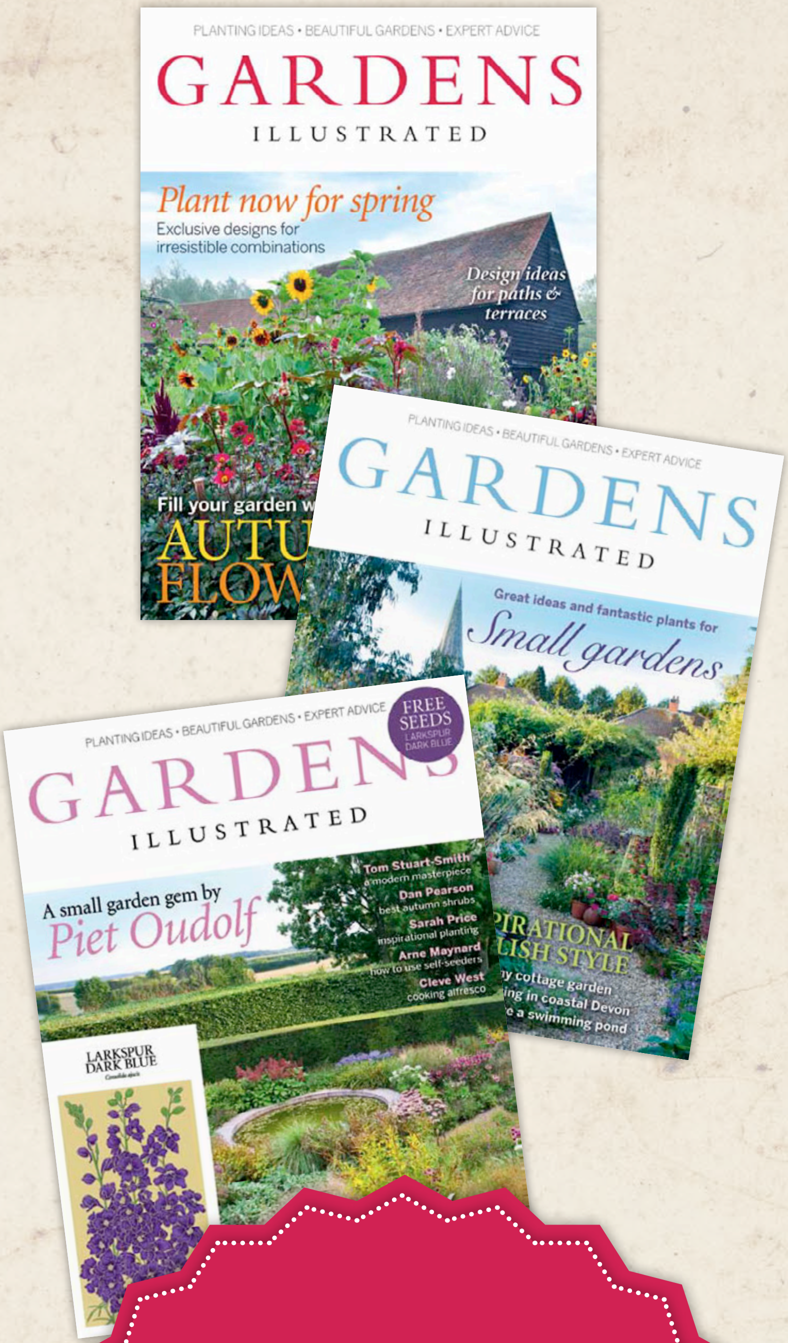
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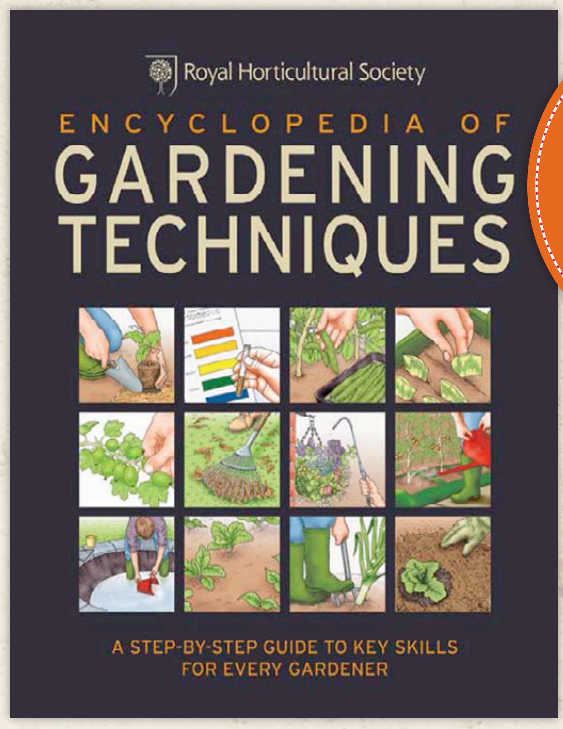
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Courtyard gardens

Three remarkable gardens, each one demonstrating that even a compact space is limited only by the imagination

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Dan Pearson's studio sits next to a busy street and 20 metres above a tube line, yet manages to remain tranquil. page 32

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A lack of space and open soil has not deterred Cornelia Steffen from creating a garden that is full of colour. page 34

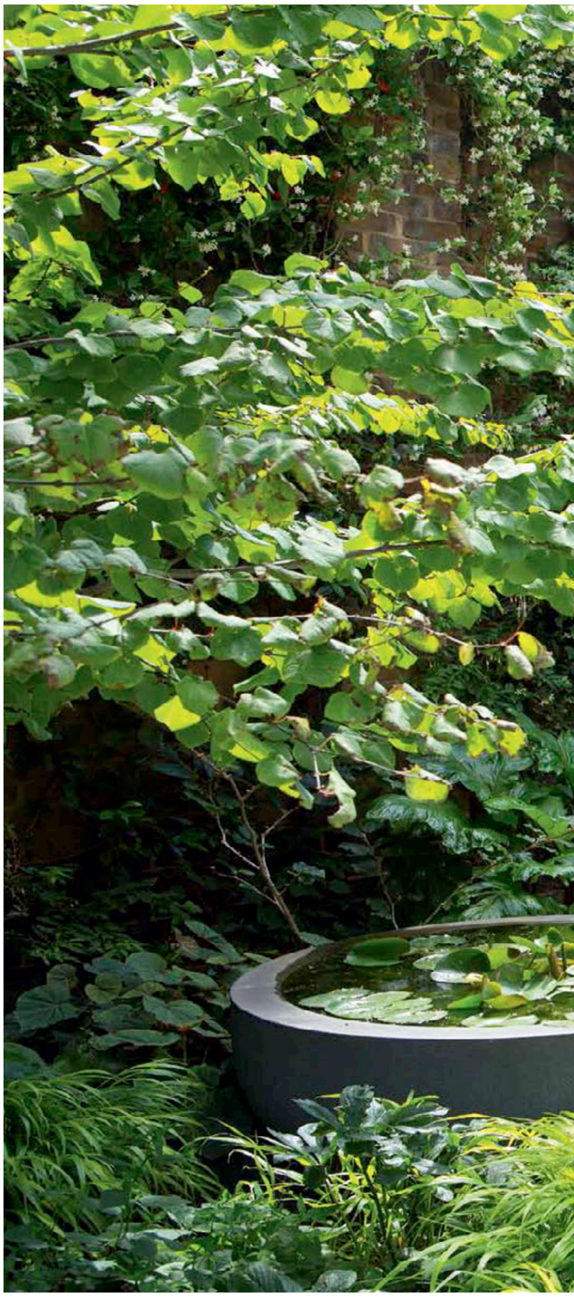
3 **An exotic sanctuary on Battersea Rise**
Designer Panni Bharti has created a place where nature holds sway even next to London's South Circular. page 38

RACHEL WARNE, SHARON PEARSON

Creating an urban oasis

Dan Pearson's studio at Waterloo sits next to a busy street and 20 metres above a rumbling tube line, yet still manages to remain beautifully tranquil

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**



Before Dan Pearson moved in, his Waterloo studio opened on to a kindergarten playground, complete with rubberised play surface, a shed for toys and one gloomy cherry tree.

Today, three lanes of traffic still thunder past outside, but in every other respect the space has been transformed. "It was important to get this right," says Dan. "It is a shop window for the business, but it also makes a real difference to the quality of life of all the people working here."

Three years after Dan arrived, the 80-square-metre space radiates an air of calm. The plant palette is deliberately muted and predominantly green. "A big part of the scheme was about having the right balance between hard and soft elements," says Dan.

The dominant feature in the courtyard now is a fine, mature katsura *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*. One of Dan's favourite trees, it went in at great expense and with considerable physical effort. In a water bowl at its base live the waterlily *Nymphaea* 'Marliacea Chromatella' and a multiplying population of goldfish.

The planting along the shadier side of the garden is woodland based and quietly unusual. Arisaemas, trilliums, epimediums and rodgersias all feature as choice specimens. The sunniest part of the courtyard adjoins a neighbouring building so, rather than risk damp ingress, Dan kept the planting here in containers. He chose three enormous pots, which on close inspection reveal the same colour range as the bricks in the walls behind.

There are unexpected splashes of colour in the planting, too, including vivid orange *Papaver rupifragum* in spring and an eclectic selection of magenta, red and pink pelargoniums by the entrance door at the height of the season. "You don't want everything to be too tastefully restrained," says Dan. "That would be boring." □

KEY ELEMENTS

WHAT **Courtyard garden.**

WHERE **Central London.**

SIZE **80m².**

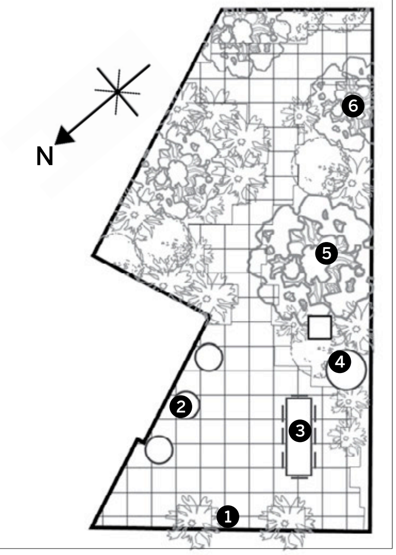
SOIL **Wholly imported topsoil in 45cm deep beds (1m deep for the tree pit).**

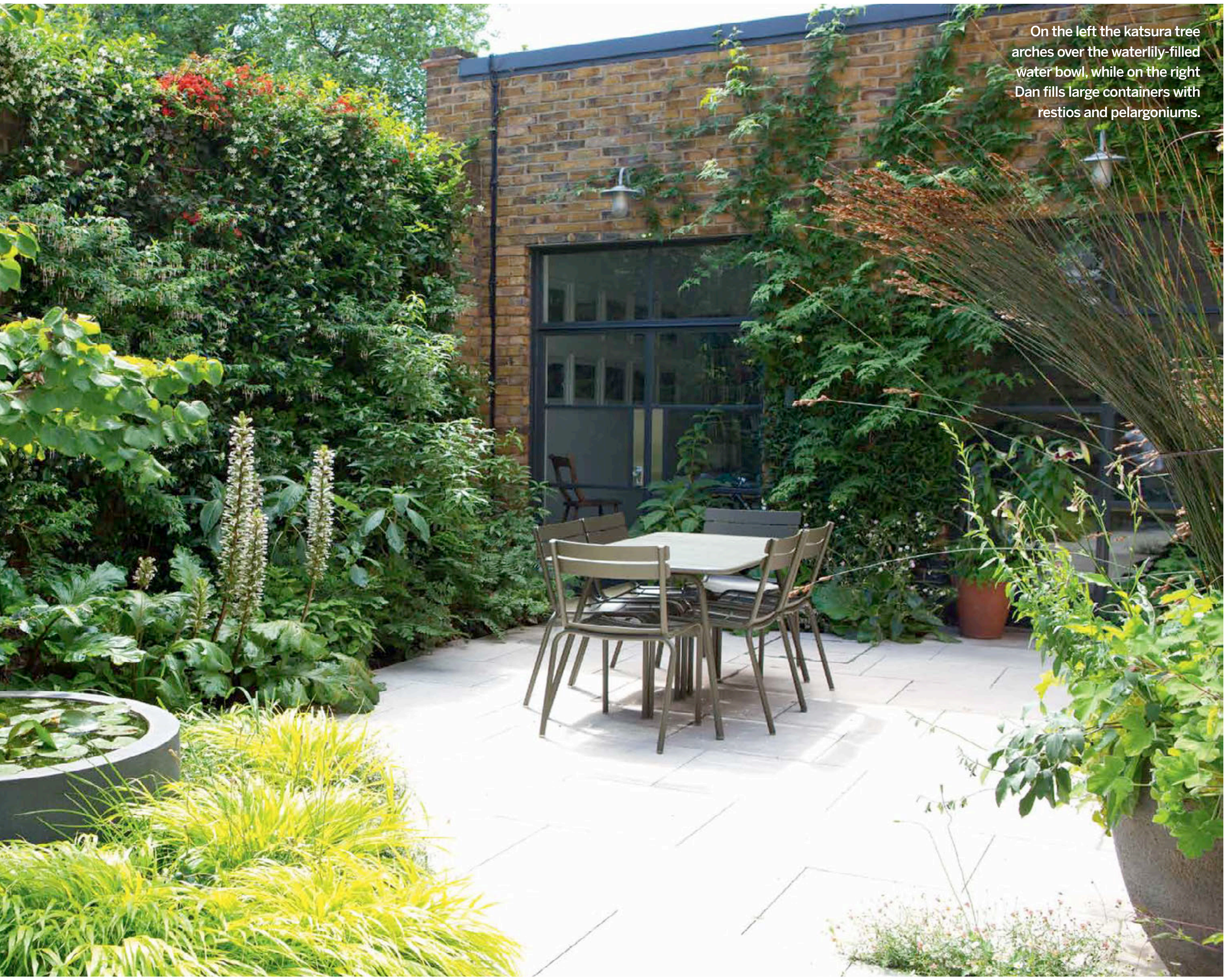
CONDITIONS **Prone to eddying winds deflected off surrounding buildings.**

SPECIAL FEATURES **Predominantly muted palette of green, white and cream.**

DESIGNED BY **Dan Pearson, www.danpearsonstudio.com**

1 Studio
2 Planters
3 Seating area
4 Pond
5 Katsura tree
6 Fence with climbers





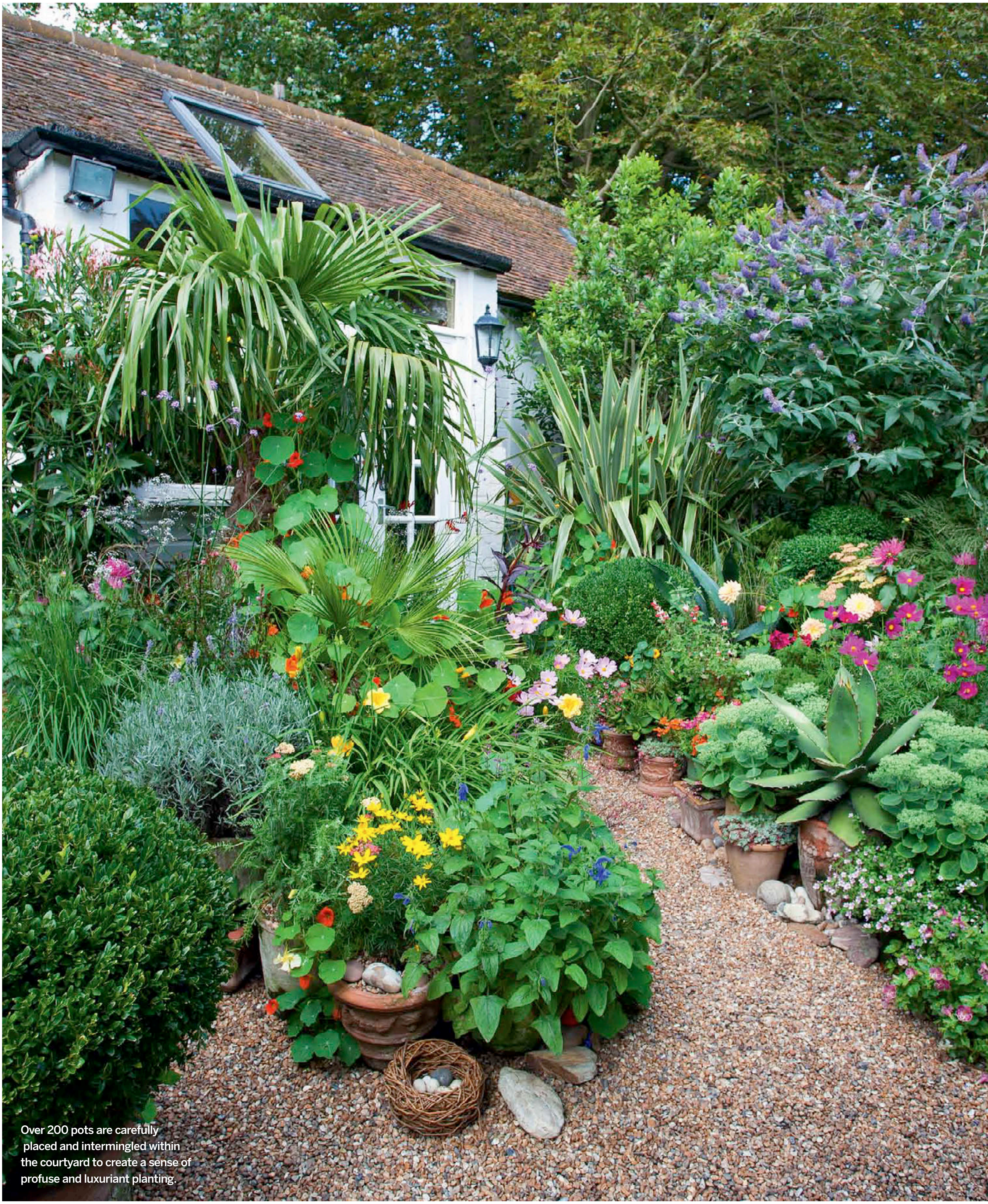
On the left the katsura tree arches over the waterlily-filled water bowl, while on the right Dan fills large containers with restios and pelargoniums.

Hakonechloa macra 'All Gold' and *Erigeron karvinskianus* froth around the base of the water bowl.

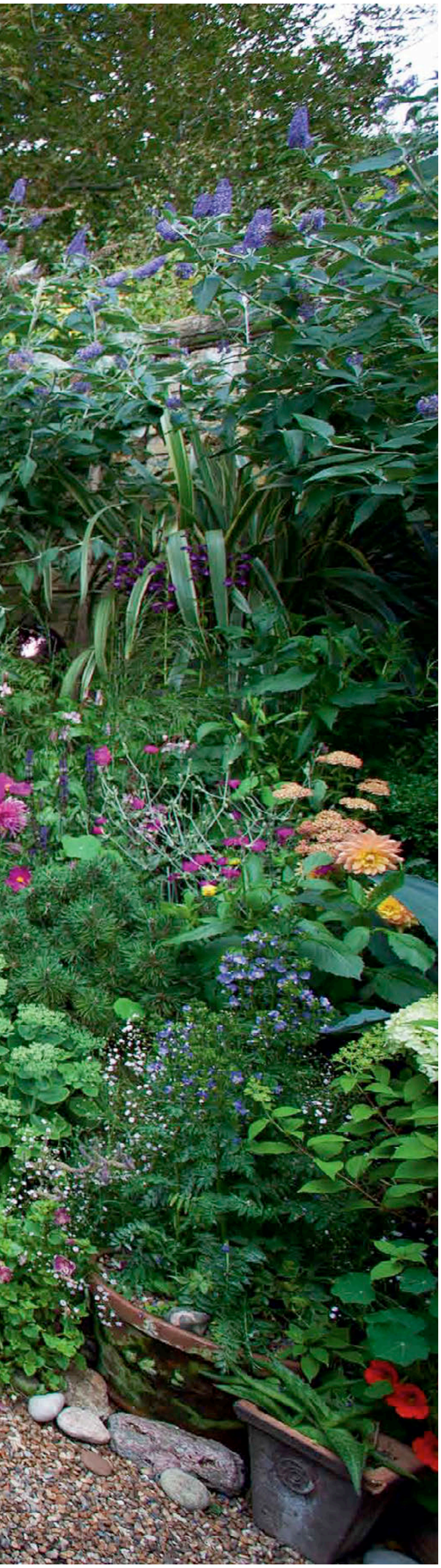
GET THE LOOK

A small garden in the city can still be a little patch of paradise. Here are five pointers to take from Dan's courtyard space.

1 Dan's three large Sandblast Curved Planters, filled with *Thamnochortus insignis* and underplanted with *Pelargonium tomentosum*, are from Red Mud Hut www.theredmudhut.co.uk
2 In an enclosed courtyard try to include still water. This water bowl is from Urbis www.urbisdesign.co.uk
3 Fermob furniture is expensive, but good quality – Dan chose the Luxembourg range in Savannah, from www.metallicgarden.co.uk
4 Utilities such as bins and bike racks should be screened from sight, but this can be done very effectively with soft planting.
5 Accept that you cannot completely block the sounds of the city. Instead, use plants to engage the senses and deflect attention from the street noise beyond.



Over 200 pots are carefully placed and intermingled within the courtyard to create a sense of profuse and luxuriant planting.



Overcoming all obstacles

A lack of space and open soil has not deterred Cornelia Steffen from creating a garden that is full of colour, with an exuberant personality to match her own

WORDS **PAULA MCWATERS** PHOTOGRAPHS **SHARON PEARSON**

What Cornelia Steffen modestly calls her "little pot garden" takes her visitors by surprise when they see it. Reactions range from "heaven" to "crazy" as they dip behind towering bamboos and then thread their way between the wealth of overhanging plants she nurtures daily in this tiny space.

When she and husband Hartmut sold their Sussex house and garden and opted to rent a converted Georgian stable block near Rye, it was no longer possible to make a garden in the ground, so Cornelia has poured her horticultural skills and passion into moveable containers instead.

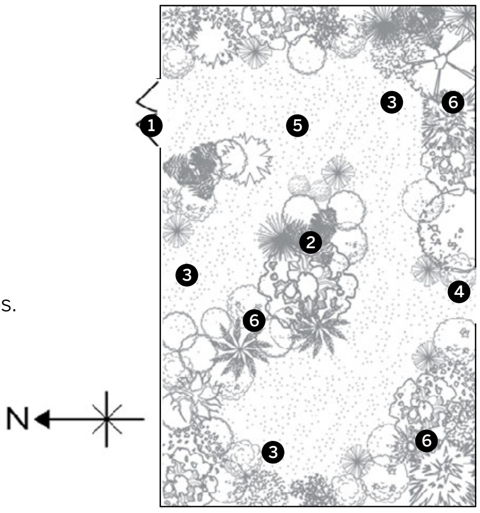
The pots – all 223 of them – stand on a bed of pea shingle in a south-facing yard just 12 metres by 7.5 metres and most are virtually invisible in high summer beneath a thicket of greenery. Cornelia considers each plant's position with great care: some are raised on bricks, to give them the light and space they need and many provide stability for each other in the face of strong winds that occasionally whip up over the high brick walls at either end of the plot.

When they sit in the garden, which Cornelia and Hartmut frequently do, they have complete privacy from the adjoining buildings behind a screen of *Phyllostachys aurea*, fragrant *Rosa gallica*, dwarf fan palm *Chamaerops humilis* and a mature *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva', favoured for its fine-cut leaves and attractive grey stems. Conditions directly behind these are ideal for shade-loving ferns and hostas.

To prevent it from feeling claustrophobic, there are openings in the planting giving views out to mature parkland trees beyond. Some plants, including clipped box balls and phormiums, have been repeated to give an harmonious rhythm to the design, which helps the plot seem larger than it is. ▷

KEY ELEMENTS

WHAT Courtyard garden created from pots.
WHERE Near Rye, East Sussex.
SIZE 12m x 7.5m.
SOIL John Innes compost in pots.
SPECIAL FEATURES Container-grown plants including evergreens, bamboo, conifers, perennials, annuals and bulbs.



1 Cottage
2 Wisteria
3 Seating areas
4 Courtyard entrance
5 Cobbles/pea shingle
6 Containers

Cornelia and Hartmut enjoy the sense of seclusion their courtyard garden offers them.

"Exoticism is introduced with drought-tolerant Mediterranean agaves, aloes and palms and the garden hums with insect life"

▷ Cornelia is a volunteer gardener at Great Dixter and acknowledges the late owner Christopher Lloyd and current head gardener Fergus Garrett as strong influences. "Christopher gave me the courage to be bold and think big and Fergus has shown me how to create a tapestry effect by interweaving plants," she says.

To knit the garden together, she encourages climbing plants such as clematis, wisteria and nasturtiums to "have a life of their own" by growing up and over other things. Bright spots of colour pop up seasonally: tulips and narcissi in spring then dahlias, coreopsis and crocosmia in late summer. Conifers are prominent. Among the original and intriguing choices Cornelia has made are *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Elegans Compacta', tinged purple in winter; striking *Thujopsis dolabrata* 'Variegata', and blue-green *Pinus strobus* 'Prostrata'.

Exoticism is introduced with drought-tolerant Mediterranean agaves, aloes and palms and the garden hums with insect life. Cornelia has promised her plants that they will be released into the soil one day but until then her strict regime of watering, feeding, pruning and repotting (see below) gives them all the care they need. □

CORNELIA'S TIPS FOR KEEPING CONTAINER PLANTS HEALTHY

1 **Carefully match pot size** with plant.

2 **Pot up in John Innes compost**: no 1, 2 or 3, depending on plant's maturity. Mix with grit for good drainage. Add water-retaining crystals.

3 **A layer of pea shingle** on top cuts down weed growth, retains moisture and deters cats.

4 **Feed weekly** in the growing season with liquid plant food such as Miracle-Gro, and add some slow-release fertiliser annually.

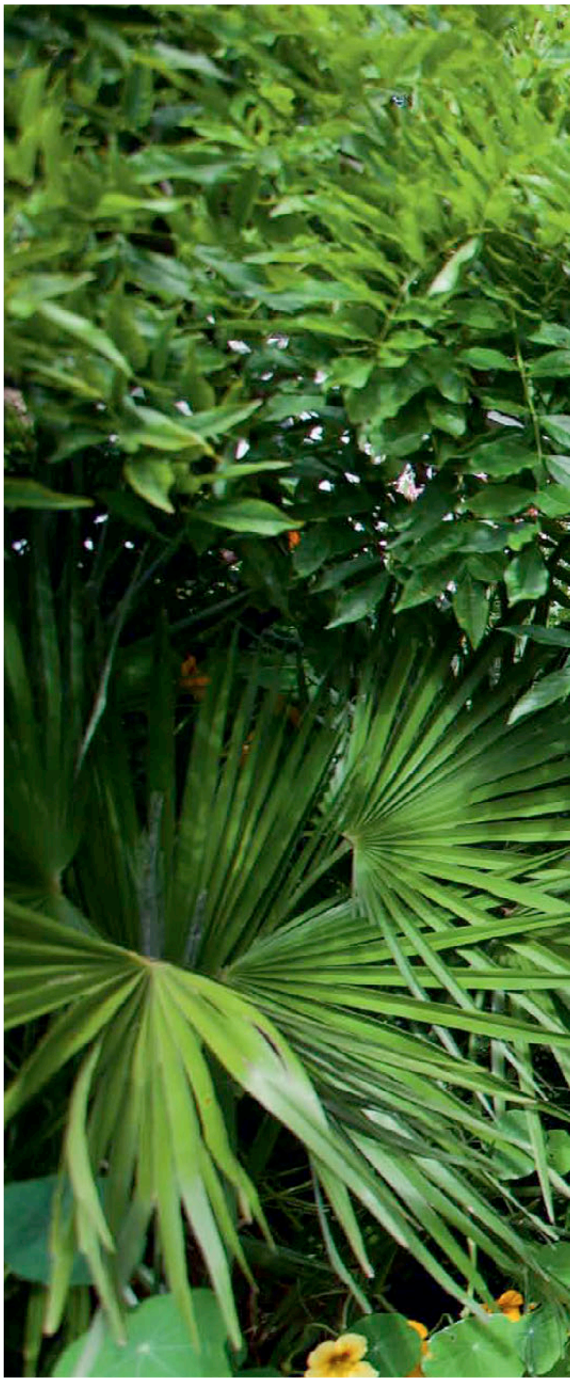
5 **Water by hand**; different plants require watering at different rates.

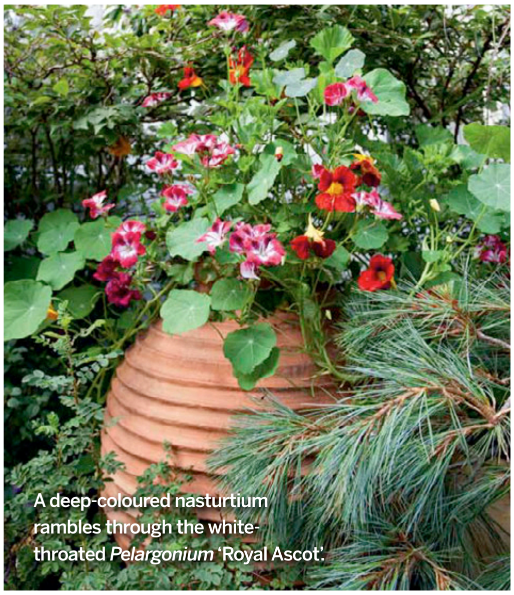
6 **Keep on top of any pest or disease problems** by frequent, close observation.

7 **Re-pot smaller plants** each spring (or late winter if weather is mild enough), pruning the roots and adding a vine weevil treatment. Add fresh compost, again mixed with grit.

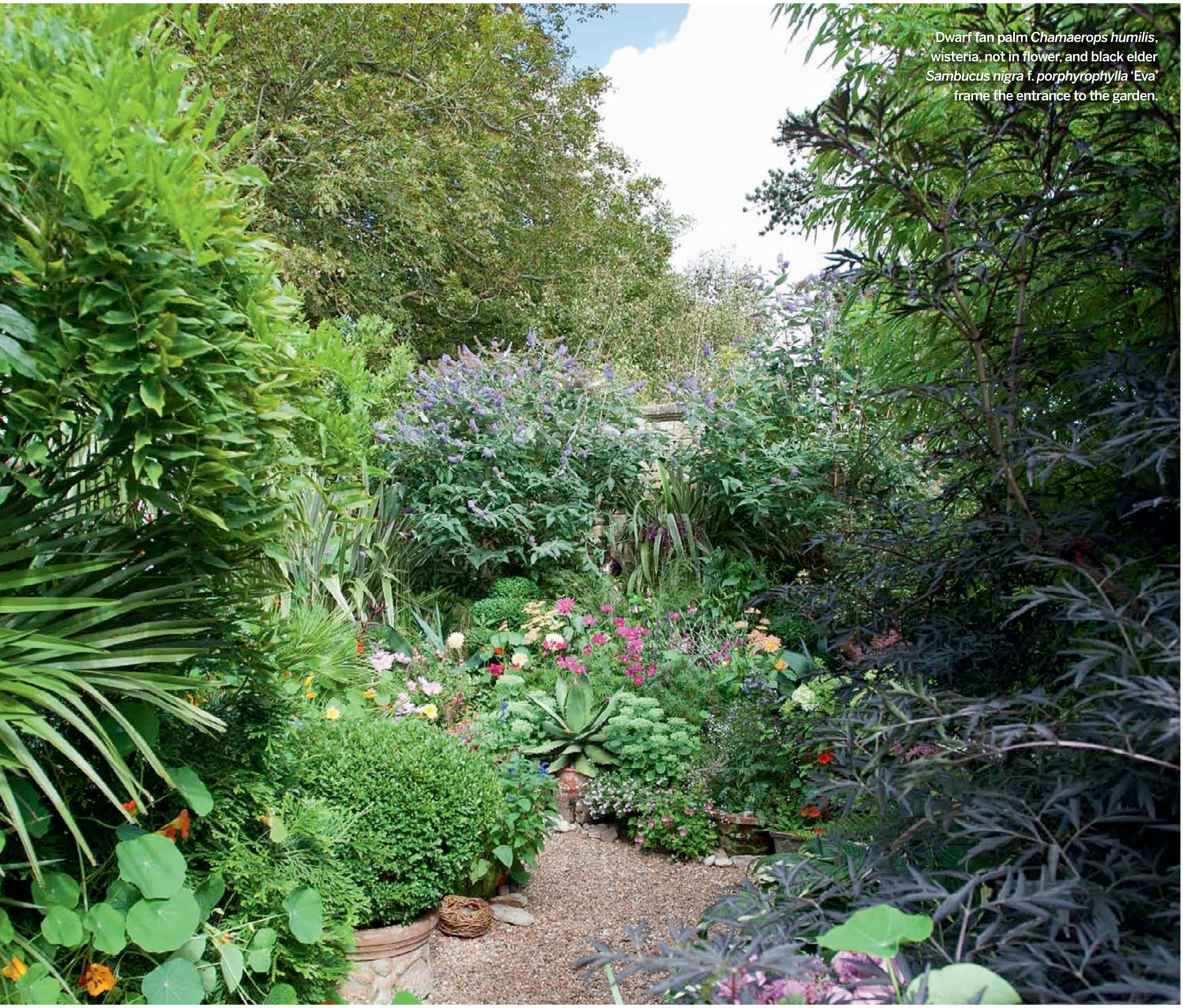
8 **For plants that need no potting but are too large to handle**, remove 5-10 cm of top root growth and compost and replace with new compost.

9 **Protect vulnerable plants** by lining pots with frost-protection fleece.

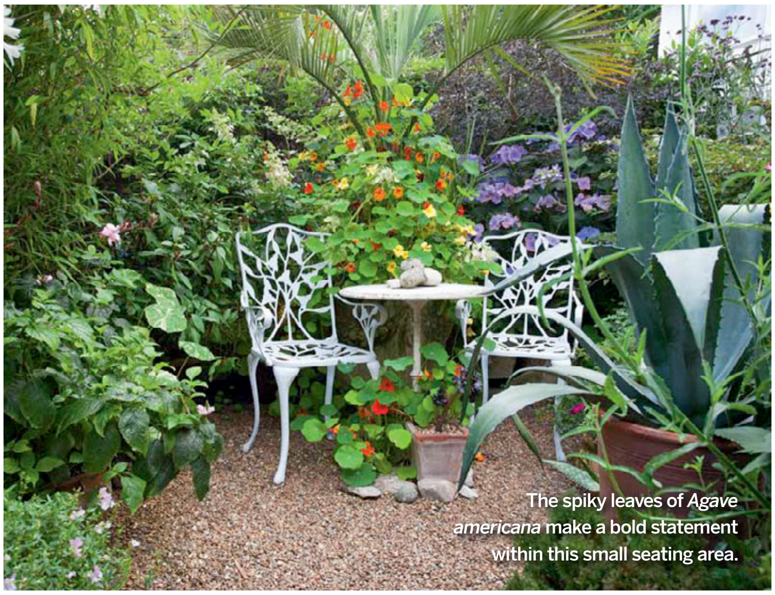




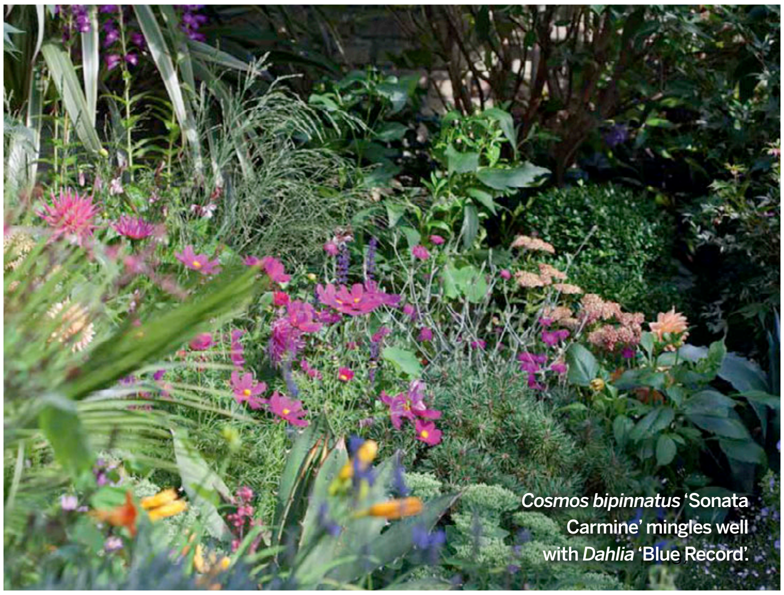
A deep-coloured nasturtium rambles through the white-throated *Pelargonium* 'Royal Ascot'.



Dwarf fan palm *Chamaerops humilis*, wisteria, not in flower, and black elder *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva' frame the entrance to the garden.



The spiky leaves of *Agave americana* make a bold statement within this small seating area.



Cosmos bipinnatus 'Sonata Carmine' mingles well with *Dahlia* 'Blue Record'.

An exotic sanctuary on Battersea Rise

Designer Panni Bharti has worked for 16 years on her own refuge, a place where nature holds sway even next to London's South Circular

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

In the deep well formed by two Victorian warehouses on Battersea Rise, garden designer and photographer Panni Bharti has created a flamboyant and exotic sanctuary. The contrast between the glare and roar of the South Circular and the forest-like tranquillity of this verdant slice of green is so intense it feels like magic. This is gardening as theatre; behind the large wooden doors painted chocolate brown is a secret garden dancing with green light.

Large squares of black slate stretch from the gateway to the two-storey building. In the beds are vertical pieces of driftwood and sculptures of Buddha, but it is the scrambling climbers, palms, bamboos and ferns that draw the eye. Nature is in the ascendant.

At ground level you are encouraged to look up at the light cutting down through the bright green leaves of *Acer palmatum* and the large-leaved *Tetrapanax papyrifer*. From inside the house looking down it's like floating in a sea of foliage.

The scent of the evergreen jasmine is an important element. The main effect is of consistently attractive evergreen foliage; but brief bursts of colour erupt like fireworks every July and August, when *Canna* x *ehemanii* lights up the dark, followed by the lemon yellow flowers of *Hedychium gardnerianum*.

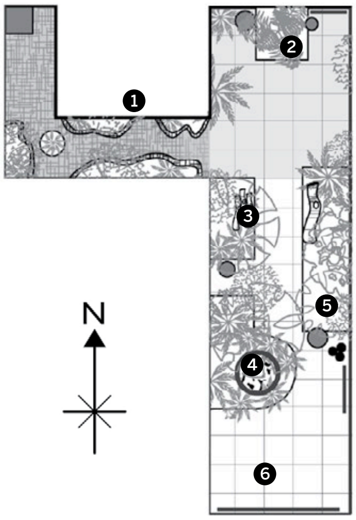
Outdoor fairy lights draw the eye into darker recesses. Shape is of utmost importance – the weird saw-teethed leaves of *Pseudopanax crassifolia* and the long glossy willow-like leaves of the slow-growing evergreen conifer *Podocarpus salignus*, stand out beside three driftwood posts sunk into a mosaic of mirror shards as if emerging from a light-reflecting pool.

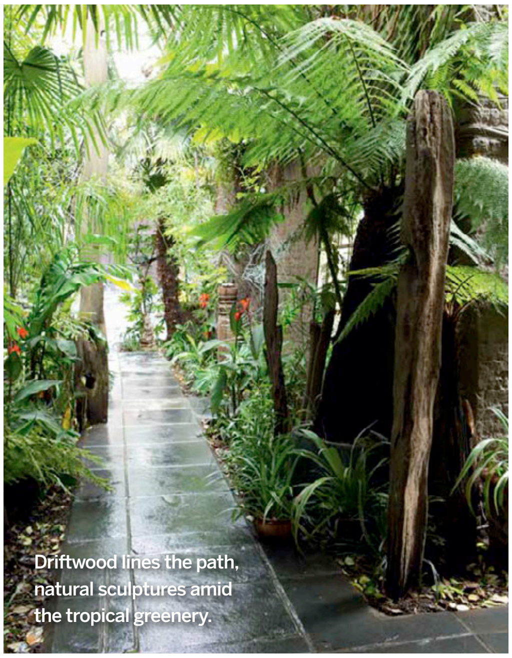
Panni gardens with a sense of fun and flux, constantly moving things around and adding new elements. This is no sterile design project, rather the constantly evolving work of a very creative plant lover and artist. □

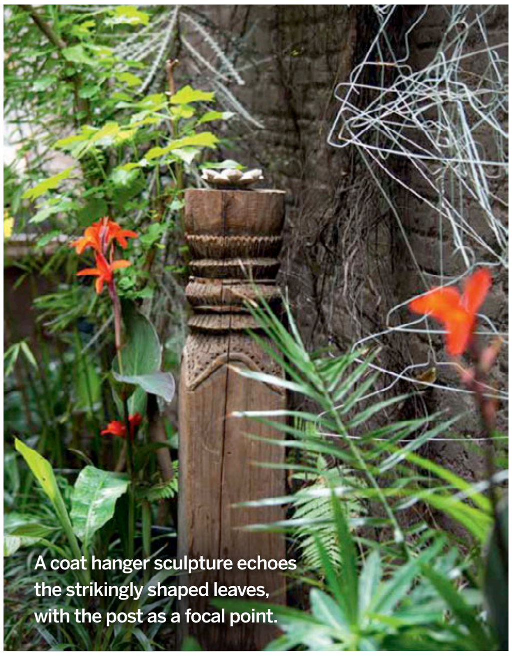
KEY ELEMENTS

WHAT Narrow courtyard garden.
WHERE South London.
SIZE 170m².
SOIL Imported topsoil with added organic seaweed.
CONDITIONS High walls create deep shade and protection for exotic plants.
SPECIAL FEATURES Bold, large-leaved plants, sculpture and driftwood columns.
DESIGNED BY Panni Bharti, www.pannibharti.com

1 Studio
2 Fairy lights
3 Driftwood columns
4 Large Chusan palm
5 Evergreen shrubs
6 Double gate to street




Driftwood lines the path, natural sculptures amid the tropical greenery.


A coat hanger sculpture echoes the strikingly shaped leaves, with the post as a focal point.

Intermingling fronds of ferns and palms disguise the narrow courtyard.

GET THE LOOK

1 **Source one or two large plants** to get you going while you wait for your climbers to scramble up. Panni began with two large Chusan palms from Architectural Plants, www.architecturalplants.com

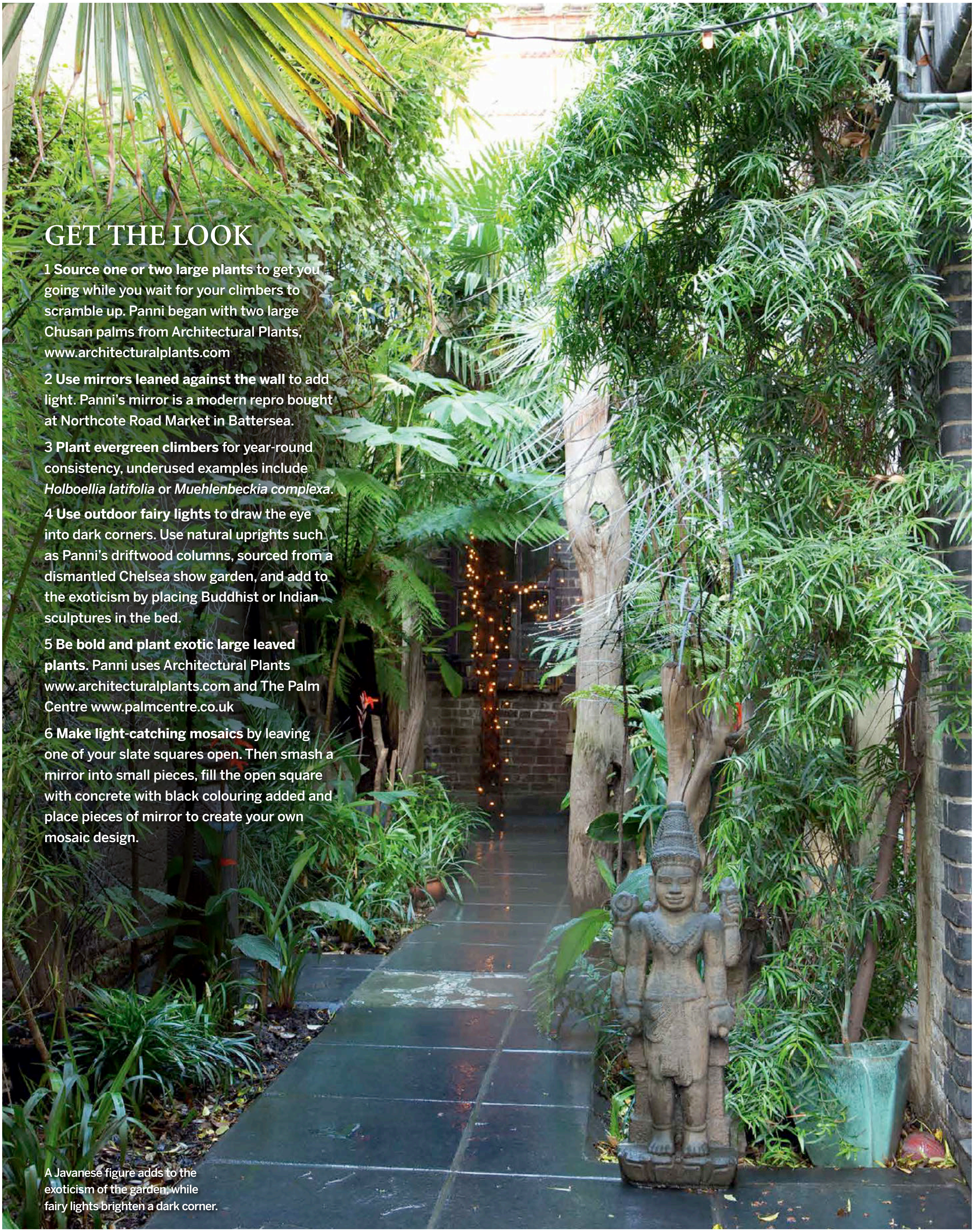
2 **Use mirrors leaned against the wall** to add light. Panni's mirror is a modern repro bought at Northcote Road Market in Battersea.

3 **Plant evergreen climbers** for year-round consistency, underused examples include *Holboellia latifolia* or *Muehlenbeckia complexa*.

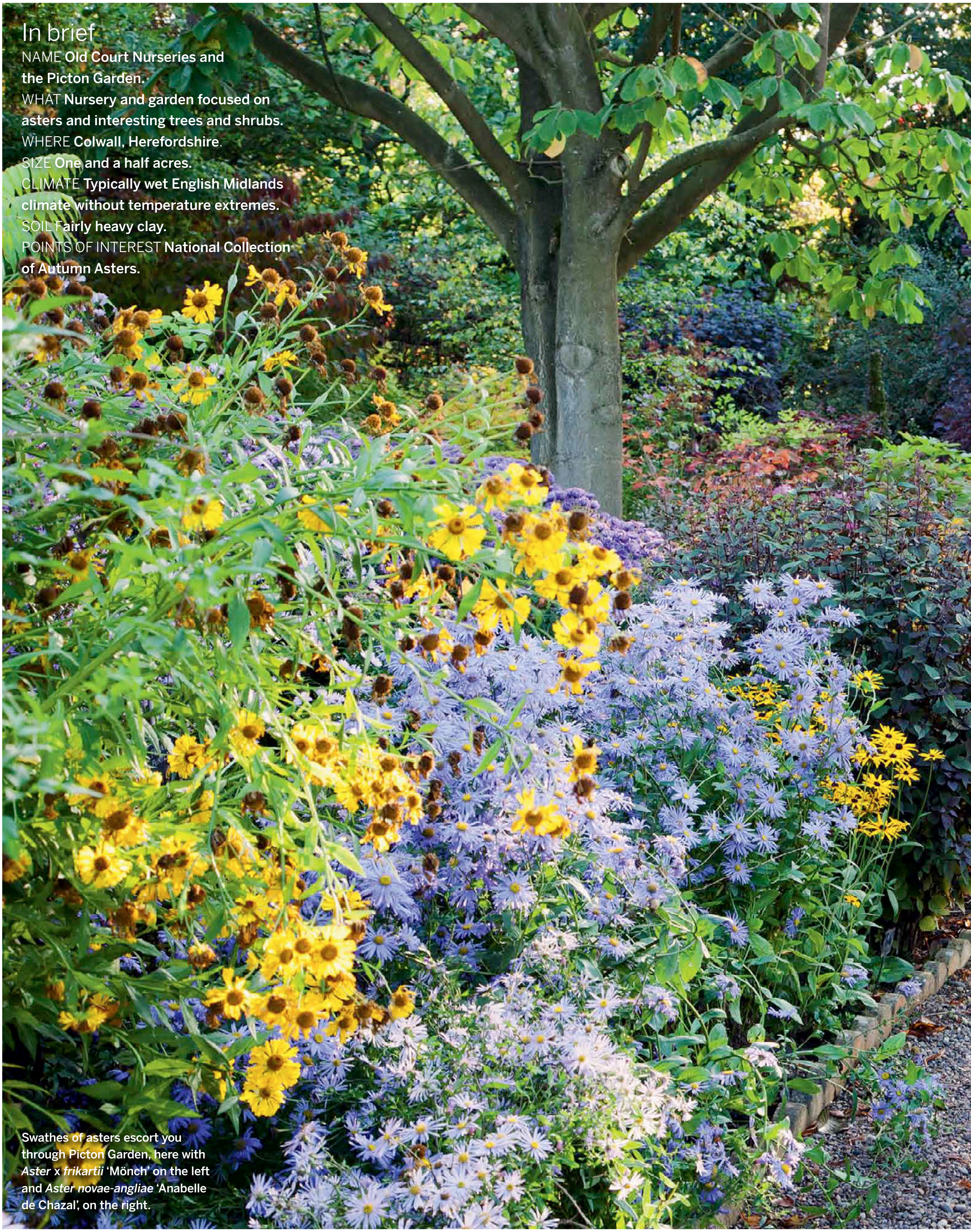
4 **Use outdoor fairy lights** to draw the eye into dark corners. Use natural uprights such as Panni's driftwood columns, sourced from a dismantled Chelsea show garden, and add to the exoticism by placing Buddhist or Indian sculptures in the bed.

5 **Be bold and plant exotic large leaved plants**. Panni uses Architectural Plants www.architecturalplants.com and The Palm Centre www.palmcentre.co.uk

6 **Make light-catching mosaics** by leaving one of your slate squares open. Then smash a mirror into small pieces, fill the open square with concrete with black colouring added and place pieces of mirror to create your own mosaic design.



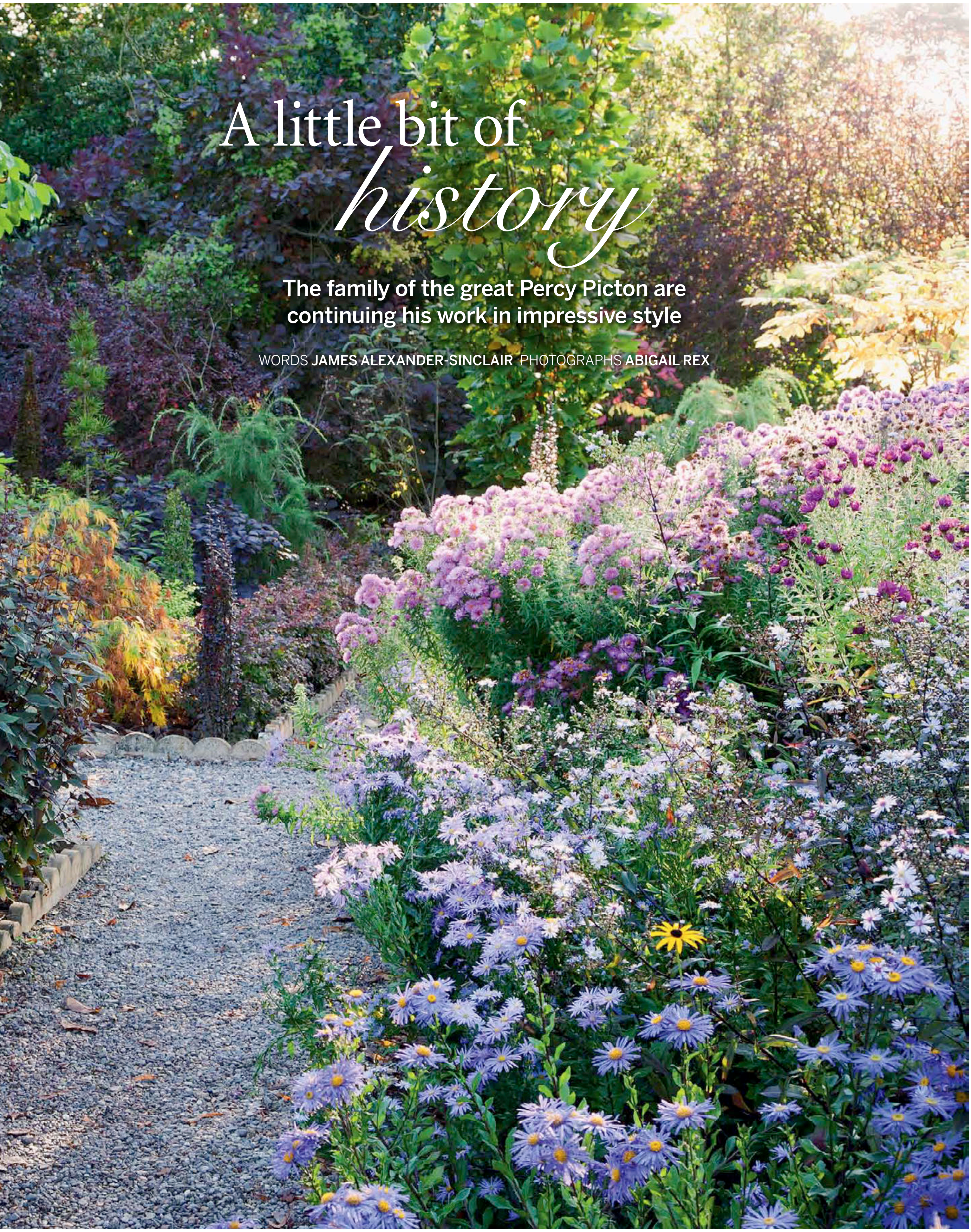
A Javanese figure adds to the exoticism of the garden, while fairy lights brighten a dark corner.



In brief

NAME **Old Court Nurseries and the Picton Garden.**
WHAT **Nursery and garden focused on asters and interesting trees and shrubs.**
WHERE **Colwall, Herefordshire**.
SIZE **One and a half acres.**
CLIMATE **Typically wet English Midlands climate without temperature extremes.**
SOIL **Fairly heavy clay.**
POINTS OF INTEREST **National Collection of Autumn Asters.**

Swathes of asters escort you through Picton Garden, here with *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch' on the left and *Aster novae-angliae* 'Anabelle de Chazal', on the right.

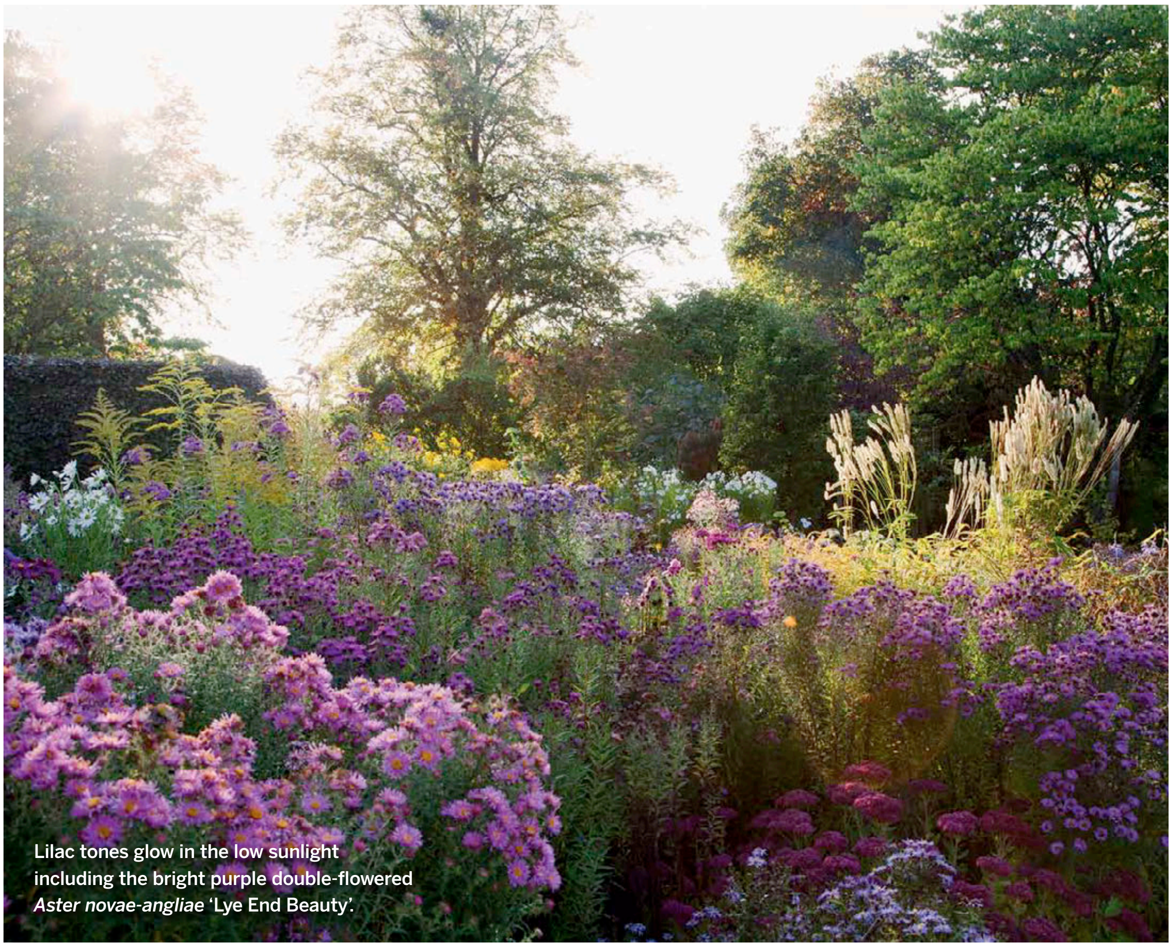


A little bit of *history*

The family of the great Percy Picton are continuing his work in impressive style

WORDS **JAMES ALEXANDER-SINCLAIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **ABIGAIL REX**

The golden yellow flowers of *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* bring drama to the autumn garden.


Lilac tones glow in the low sunlight including the bright purple double-flowered *Aster novae-angliae* 'Lye End Beauty'.

The large, purple-blue flowers of *Aster amellus* 'King George' sit pertly at the front of the crowd.

Owner Paul Picton and daughter Helen survey the autumn display at Picton Garden.

A meandering path weaves past *Aster turbinellus* hybrid on one side and yellow *Rudbeckia subtomentosa* on the other.

In 1906 Ernest Ballard established Old Court Nurseries in the lee of the Malvern Hills. He was one of the first nurserymen to specialise in growing asters and he spent the next 50 years breeding and developing new strains of the Michaelmas daisy. In those days the nursery consisted of a big field full of asters with not much in the way of garden. Today there is a captivating and varied plantsman's garden. It also has an extraordinary history, touching some of the greatest names in British horticulture.

Percy Picton arrived at the nursery in 1947 to help Ballard after beginning his gardening life working for the pioneering William Robinson at Gravetye Manor in Sussex. He also spent much of his spare time helping the great alpine gardener, WE Th Ingwersen, set up his nursery at Birch Farm. Between them the two older men steered Percy's career firstly to Hagley Hall (which boasted a vast rock garden) and thence to Old Court. The garden and nurseries are now run by Percy's son Paul along with his wife, Meriel, and their daughter Helen.

Disappearing act

The aster has had a rather mixed history. Around 100 years ago it was to be found in every garden in the country and then, suddenly, it vanished from the consciousness of the fickle public, replaced by dwarf conifers and heathers. Up until then the plants were mostly sold bare root and wrapped in newspaper at certain times of the year. Popular plants had to be ordered long in advance. Then the garden centre, that great one-stop-shop, was invented and no longer were gardeners prepared to wait around. Paul remembers that, "in the 1950s, we would be swamped every autumn weekend by visitors from Birmingham or further afield then, one week, nobody turned up. The next week we brought a pack of cards to the nursery."

Percy and Paul adapted quickly by starting to propagate a wider range of plants – in particular alpine plants, which ▷

GROWING ASTERS

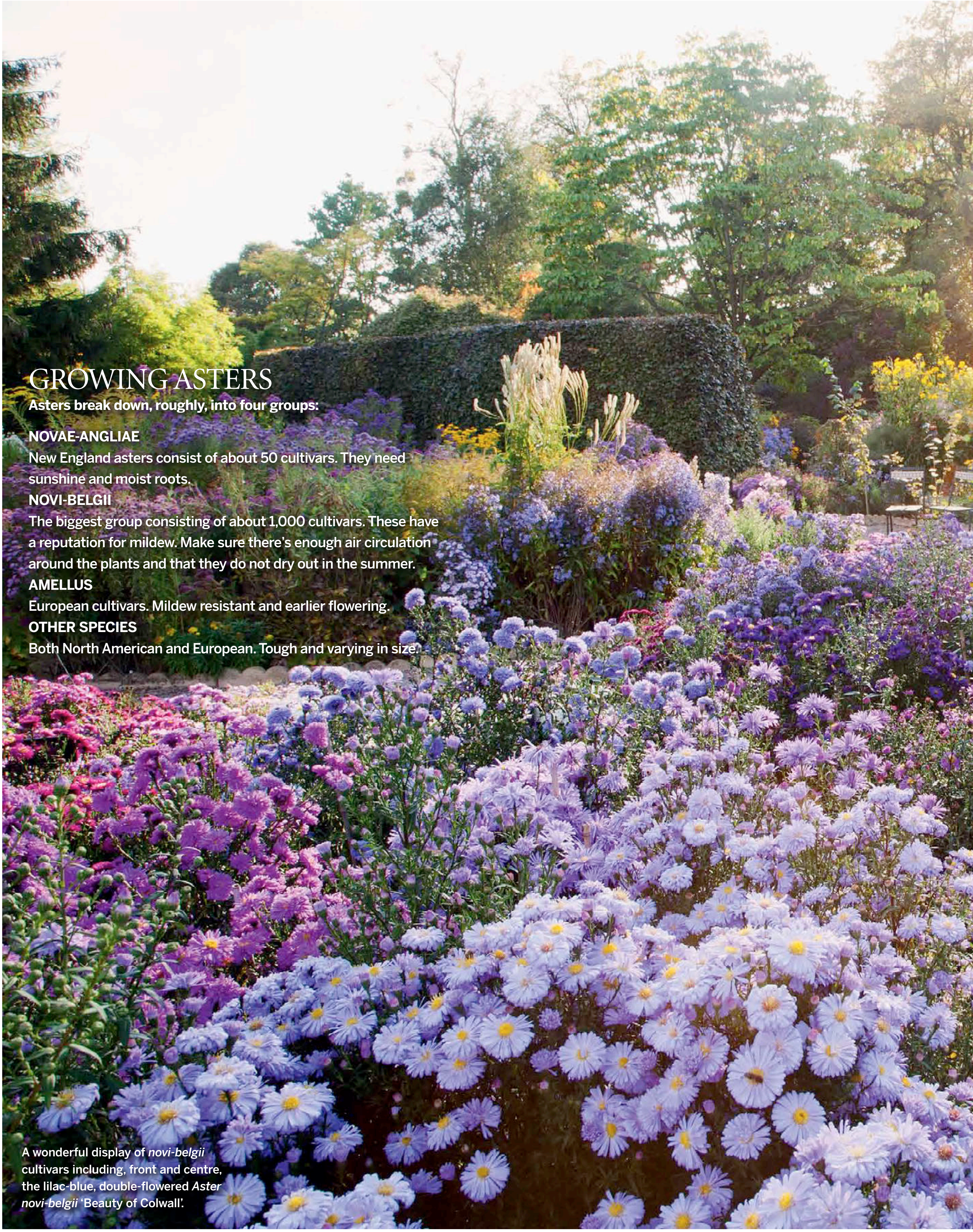
Asters break down, roughly, into four groups:

NOVAE-ANGLIAE
New England asters consist of about 50 cultivars. They need sunshine and moist roots.

NOVI-BELGII
The biggest group consisting of about 1,000 cultivars. These have a reputation for mildew. Make sure there's enough air circulation around the plants and that they do not dry out in the summer.

AMELLUS
European cultivars. Mildew resistant and earlier flowering.

OTHER SPECIES
Both North American and European. Tough and varying in size.



A wonderful display of *novi-belgii* cultivars including, front and centre, the lilac-blue, double-flowered *Aster novi-belgii* 'Beauty of Colwall'.

> *"There are some very exciting and unusual shrubs, many of them planted specifically to complement the asters"*

▷ had always been a passion – and soon the nursery was selling a good range of alpines and shrubs. By the 1980s more and more of the nursery fields began to be transformed into garden, although without losing sight of the asters. Paul and Meriel set up the National Collection of Autumn Asters and now they grow in almost every part of the garden.

The Picton Garden is for meandering rather than orderly procession. There is no central lawn or wide open space. The entire garden is given over to plants accessible via a network of pathways that duck through thickets and then double back to emerge among shrubberies or wander past hidden seats.

Down the generations

To follow Paul round the garden is an hour well spent, not only because he is excellent company but also because there are some pretty phenomenal specimens. "Part of me," he admits "is a frustrated arboretum owner." There are towering trees, some sown by Paul from seed, and some very exciting and unusual shrubs, many of them planted specifically to complement the asters. Two areas stand out: the Silver Garden, where there is an *Acer griseum* and a great tumble of *Hippophae rhamnoides*, and a part of the garden planted to mark the Nursery's centenary in 2006, centred on a *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Fastigiatum'.

It's good to see a family business rolling down the generations. Percy Picton's name lives on in a charity set up to give grants to local horticultural students, and a great deal of our horticultural history is traceable through this garden. Let's hope the glory days of asters and alpines soon return. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Old Court Nurseries, Colwall, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6QE

TEL 01684 540 416

WEBSITE www.autumnasters.co.uk

OPEN Dates for 2013: Old Court Nurseries 1 May-31 Jul, Wed-Sat 2-5pm (or by appointment). 3 Aug-31 Aug, Wed-Sun 11am-5pm. 1 Sep-20 Oct, daily 11am-5pm. The Picton Garden 3 Aug-31 Aug, Wed-Sun 11-5pm. 1 Sep-20 Oct, daily 11am-5pm.

MAIL ORDER Can be placed at any time, though plants are only sent during May and early June.

TURN THE PAGE FOR 28 OF PICTON'S MOST APPEALING ASTERS ▷

28 Picton asters

A selection of asters from Paul Picton’s outstanding collection

1 ***Aster novae-angliae* ‘Septemberrubin’** Large purple-red flowerheads. H 1.3m

2 ***A. n-a.* ‘Anabelle de Chazal’** Beautiful light rose-pink flowers in October. H 1m

3 ***A. novi-belgii* ‘Steinebrück’** White flowers from September. H 1.5m

4 ***A. amellus* ‘King George’** Large, purple-blue flowers. H 60cm

5 ***A. n-b.* ‘Julia’** Light pink single flowers from September into October. H 1.2m

6 ***A. ageratoides* ‘Stardust’** Compact habit and long-flowering season. H 55cm

7 ***A. n-a.* ‘Kate Deamon’** Large pink double flowerheads. H 1.2m

8 ***A. amellus* ‘Veilchenkönigin’** Violet flowerheads on erect sprays. H 40cm

9 ***A. turbinellus* hybrid** Narrow green leaves and blue flowers. H 1.35m

10 ***A. n-a.* ‘Naomi’** Pale pink flowers from September into October. H 1.2m

11 ***A. n-b.* ‘Cliff Lewis’** Violet-purple flowers September into October. H 1.1m

12 ***A. n-b.* ‘Anita Webb’** Pyramids of pink flowers from early September. H 1m

13 ***A.* ‘Prairie Purple’** Small lilac-purple flowers over dark foliage. H 1.3m

14 ***A. ericoides* ‘Yvette Richardson’** Sprays tend to flop over giving the plant an almost prostrate appearance. H 45cm

15 ***A. laevis* ‘Vesta’** White flowers. Great at the back of borders. H 1.5m

16 ***A. amellus* ‘Gründer’** Very large, lilac-blue flowers with strong stems. H 80cm

17 ***A. n-b.* ‘Grey Lady’** Double flowerheads, white with just a hint of violet. H 90cm

18 ***A. cordifolius* ‘Sweet Lavender’** Sprays from compact clumps. H 1.2m

19 ***A. e.* ‘Esther’** A loose bouquet composed of lilac-rose flowers. H 75cm

20 ***A. n-b.* ‘Mount Everest’** Graceful pyramids of large single flowers. H 1.65m

21 ***A. n-a.* ‘Foxy Emily’** Large soft pale pink flowers. H 1.2m

22 ***A. n-b.* ‘Alderman Vokes’** Mauve-pink single flowers early in the season. H 80cm

23 ***A. e.* ‘Cinderella’** Long-lasting sprays of daisy-like white flower heads. H 75cm

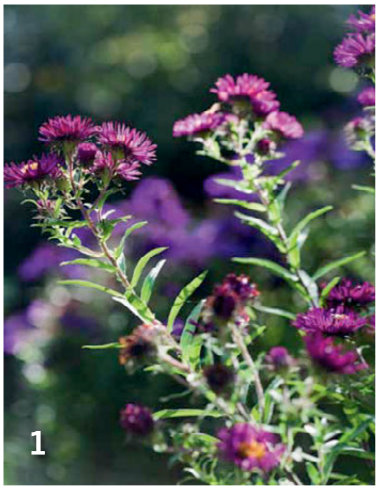
24 ***A. amellus* ‘Rosa Erfüllung’** Strong-growing bright purple-pink. H 60cm

25 ***A. sedifolius* ‘Nanus’** Ferny leaves and lots of starry lilac blue flowers. H 60cm

26 ***A. n-a.* ‘Treasure’** Light violet flowers produced from September. H 1.4m

27 ***A. pyrenaeus* ‘Lutetia’** Pale violet flowers on branching sprays. H 70cm

28 ***A. n-b.* ‘Blue Eyes’** Deep lavender-blue single flowers in September. H 1.2m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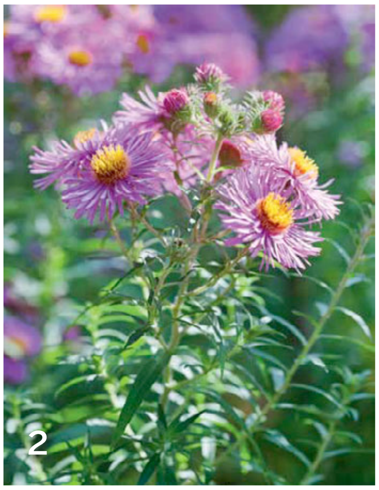
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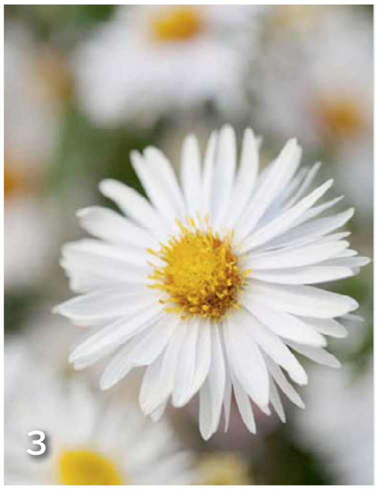
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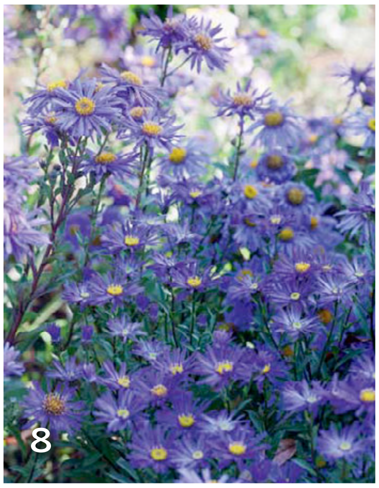
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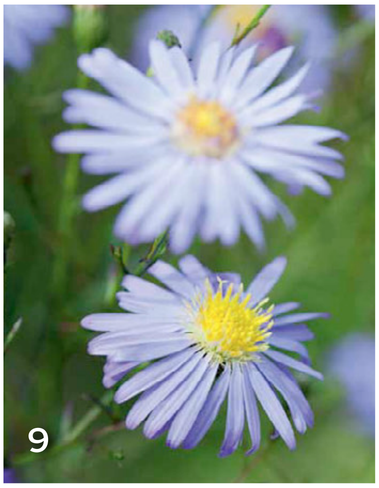
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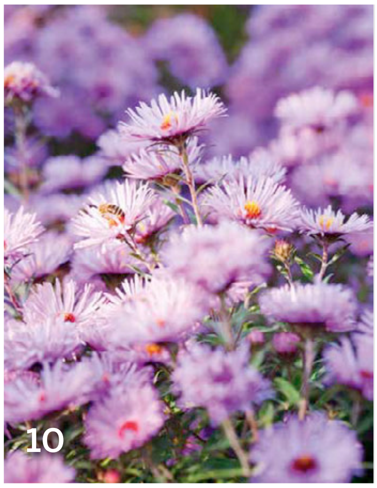
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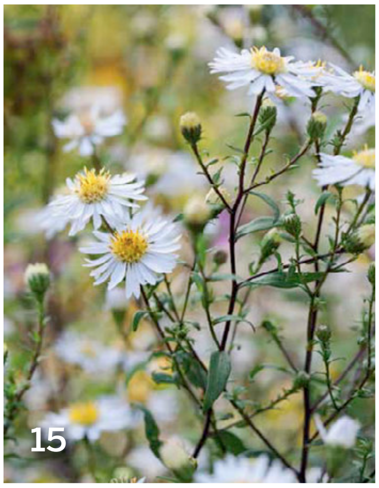
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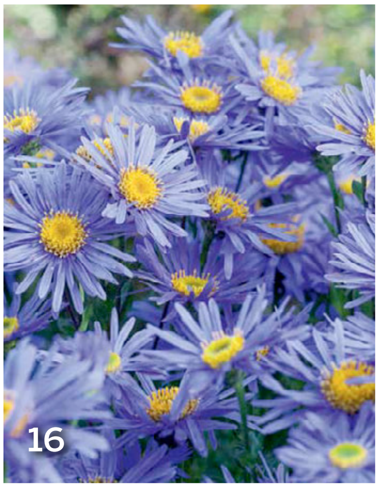
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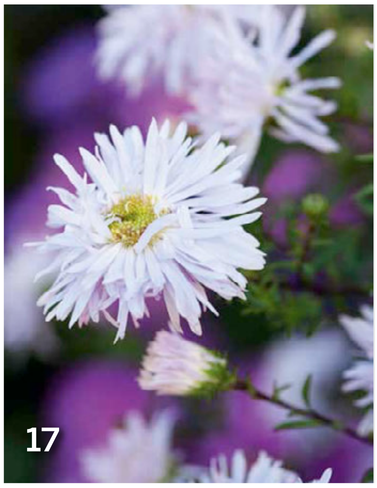
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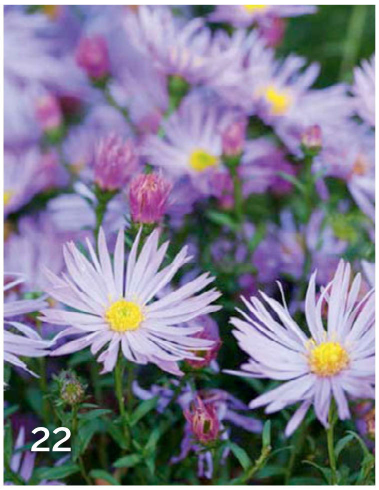
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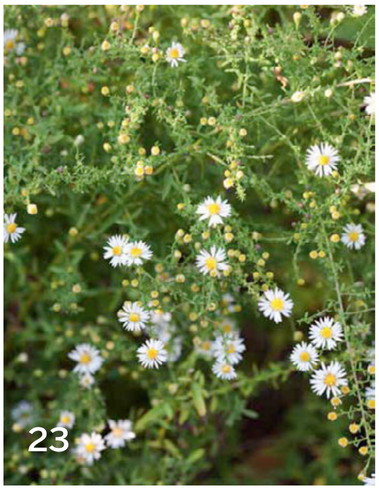
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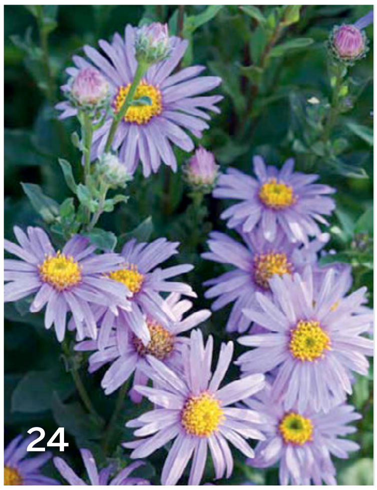
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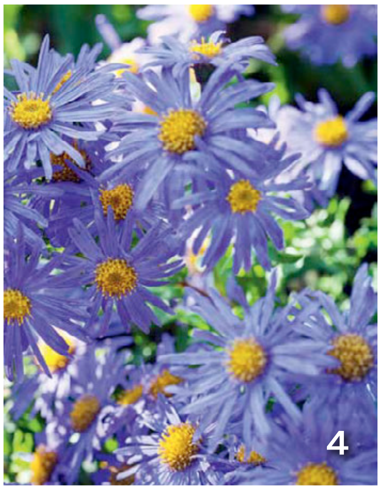
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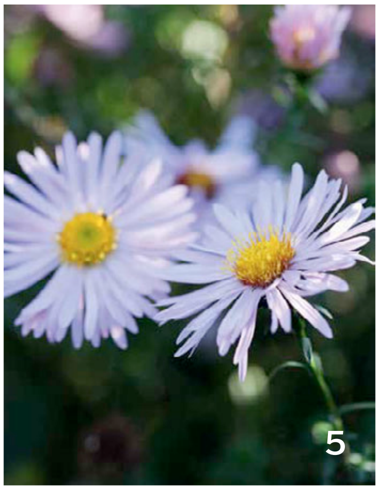
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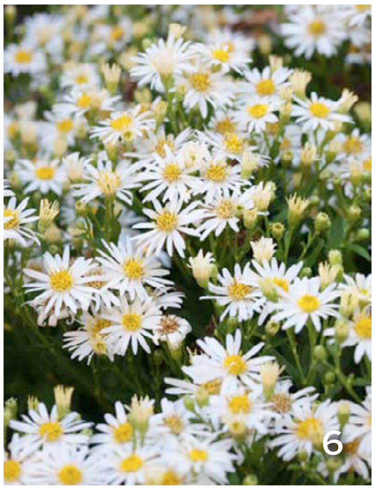
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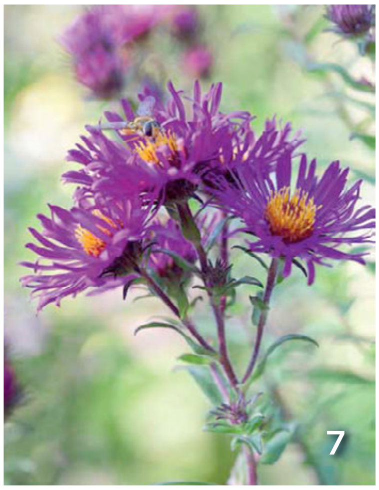
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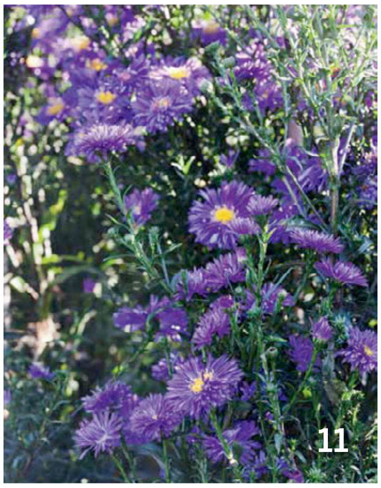
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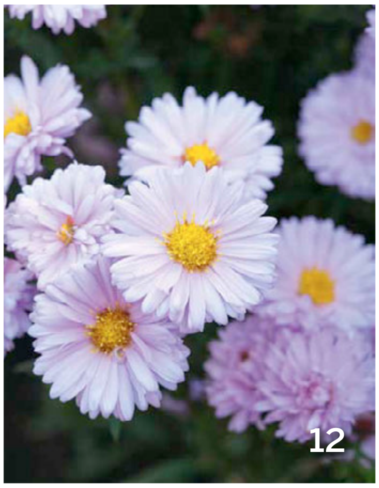
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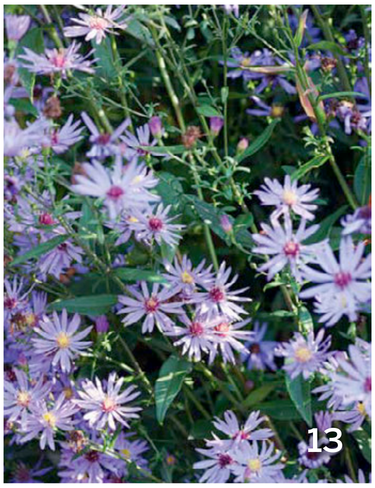
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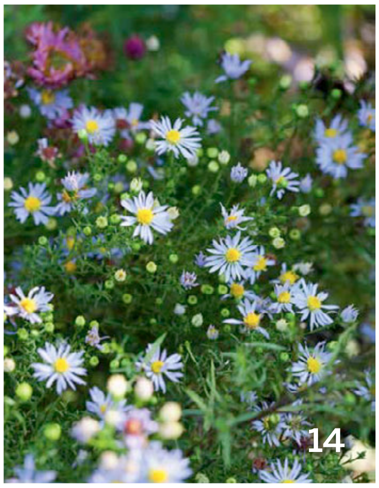
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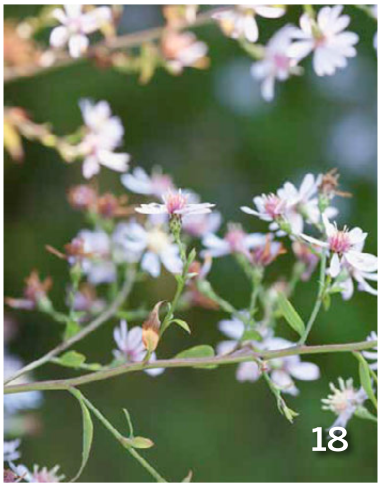
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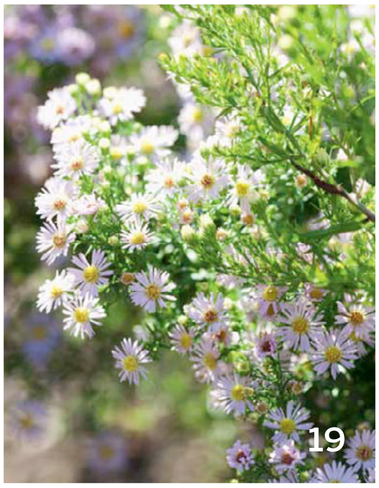
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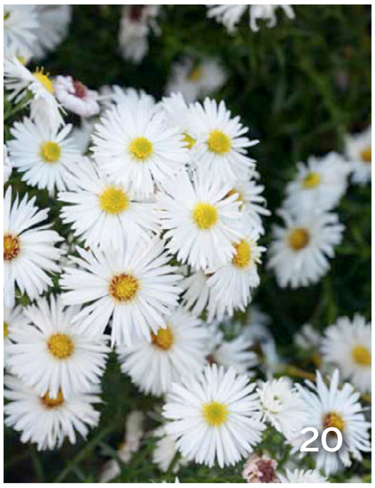
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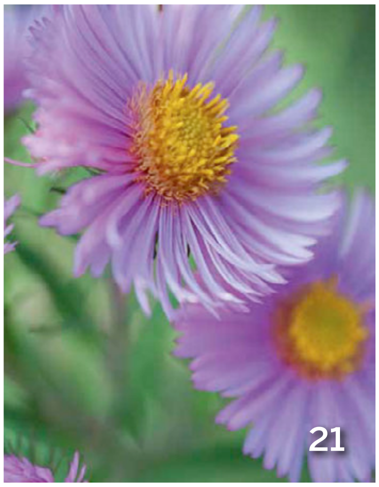
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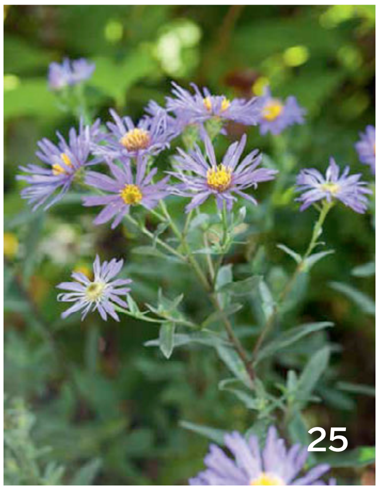
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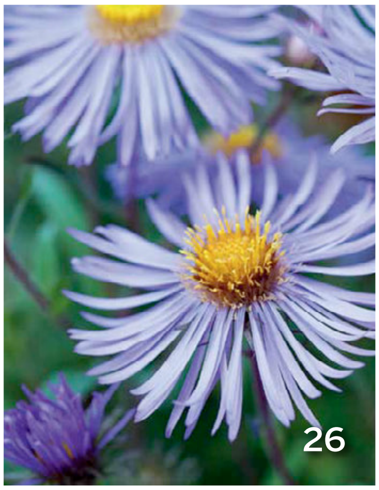
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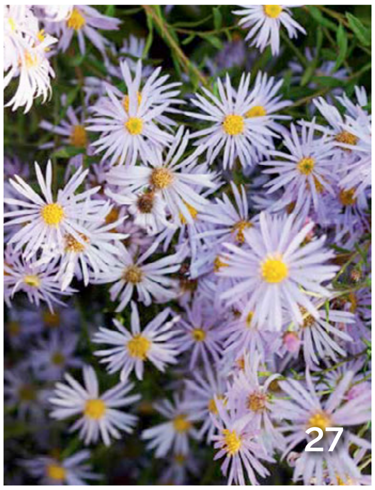
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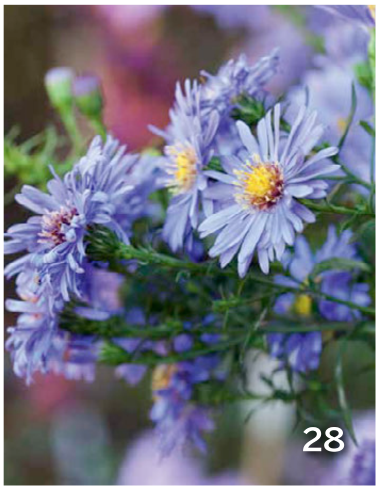
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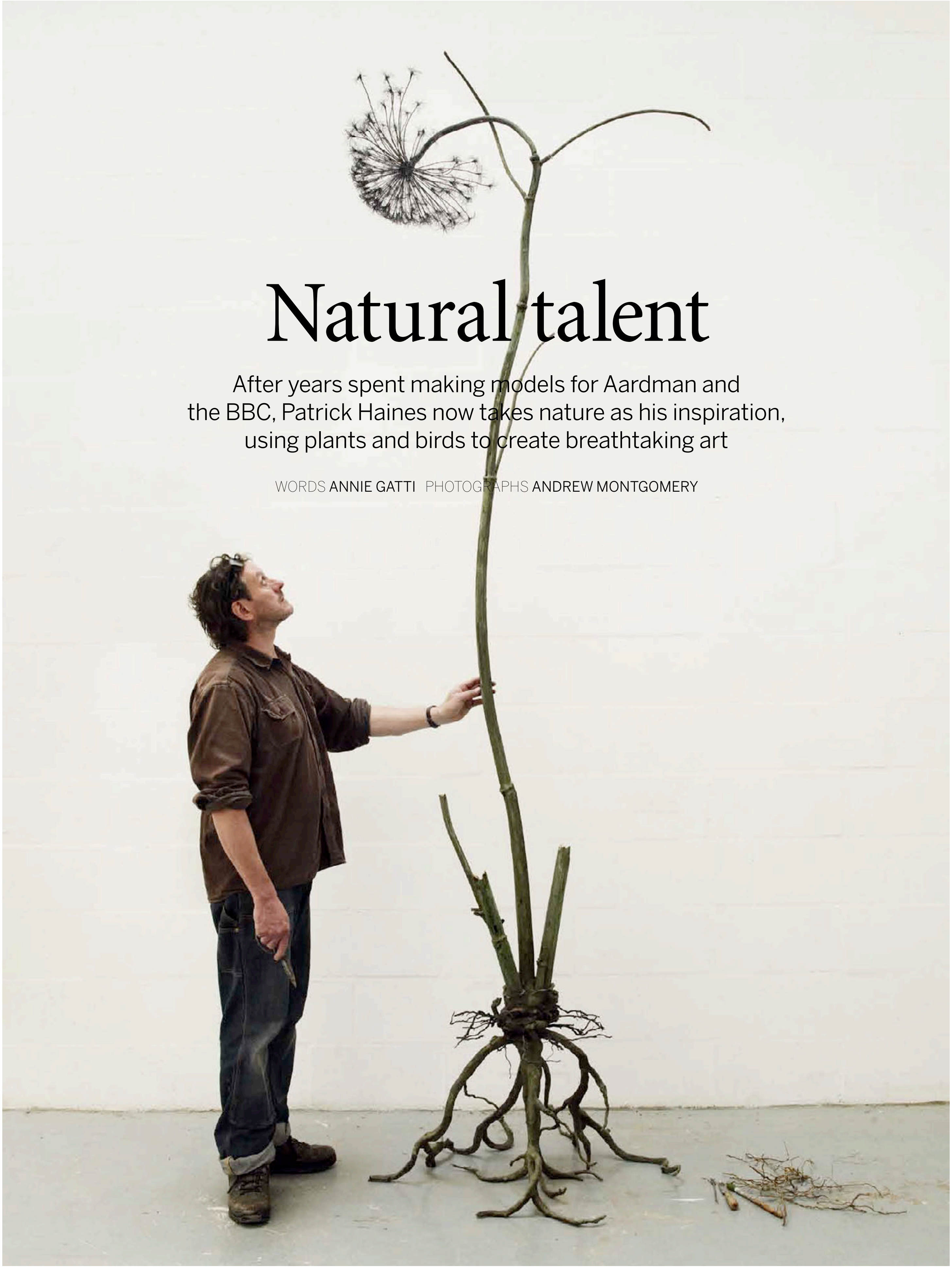
Natural talent

After years spent making models for Aardman and the BBC, Patrick Haines now takes nature as his inspiration, using plants and birds to create breathtaking art

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY



Reminiscent of a naturalist's eclectic collection, artist Patrick Haines gains creative energy from examining the natural world.

"Often, you don't know why you make it and what it's about, and then a year later it can all fall into place"

In a former tea packing shed on the waterfront in Bristol there's a long light room with a workbench on one wall covered in an eclectic array of objects and contraptions, from boxes of bird bones, skulls and claws, dried stems and branches to paintbrushes, phials of coloured liquids, sketchbooks, clamps and grinders. A number of plant stems displayed, like botanical illustrations, with their roots attached and sculpted birds – all works in progress – are fixed to the other wall and and at the far end there's a bookcase full of gold-edged antique books, hermetic jars with birds perched on top, a giant hogweed seedhead on a clamp, a nest made of soldered nails. It could be the shared workspace of a bibliophile, naturalist, jeweller, modelmaker and artist. In fact for the past six years this has been the studio of just one man, sculptor Patrick Haines.

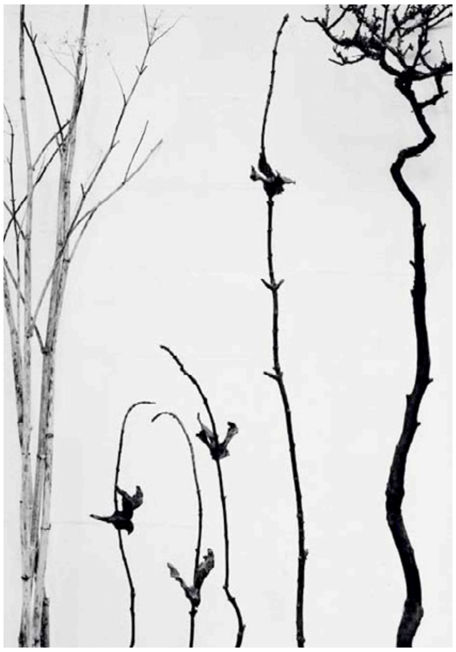
Although most of Patrick's work is cast in bronze, his exquisitely conceived and constructed pieces are the result of a kind of alchemy. He takes pieces from nature (often parts of a plant or bird bones) and recreates them either by deconstructing them and then painstakingly reassembling them, or by juxtaposing them against objects of formality, of man-made construction, to evoke a feeling or capture a moment. "The birds and the plants are a vehicle for looking at something else rather than a subject in themselves," explains Patrick.

He doesn't set out to create symbolic or moralistic pieces, though some seem imbued with meaning. "Often," he says, "you don't know why you make it and what it's about, and then a year later it can all fall into place." An observation of the way plants grow or how birds behave can provide the inspiration for a piece. *Blackthorn House*, and its sister piece *Hawthorn House*, grew from watching a group of birds staying put in a thorn hedge. "It seemed such an aggressive and sharp place to be but then I realised that there was a sparrowhawk nearby so it was actually a safe haven."

Childhood asthma meant long periods of modelmaking and drawing and a dislike of formal schooling. He left at 16 to study horticulture, fine art and art sculpture – his degree show included pyres of rosebay willowherb. Years of commercial sculpting, mould and modelmaking for the BBC, Aardman Animations, Spitting Image Studios and others followed. Then, shortly before his daughter Rosie was born he made *Hermetic Bird*, a bronze bird perched on a glass flask peering at a gold skull inside it. In just two days, he sold the whole edition of 25 and so he decided to go solo. His largest piece, the 4-metre *Hogweed*, cast from plants he gathered at Henley with seedheads sculpted from bronze rods and fine wire, has an edition of just three. Embedded in the rootball is the body of a goldfinch, the bird that was said to have taken thorns out of Christ's crown and that Darwin used in his research. "He's here with all this weight of meaning but he's buried and forgotten," explains Patrick. "Out of his memory has grown this majestic plant." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

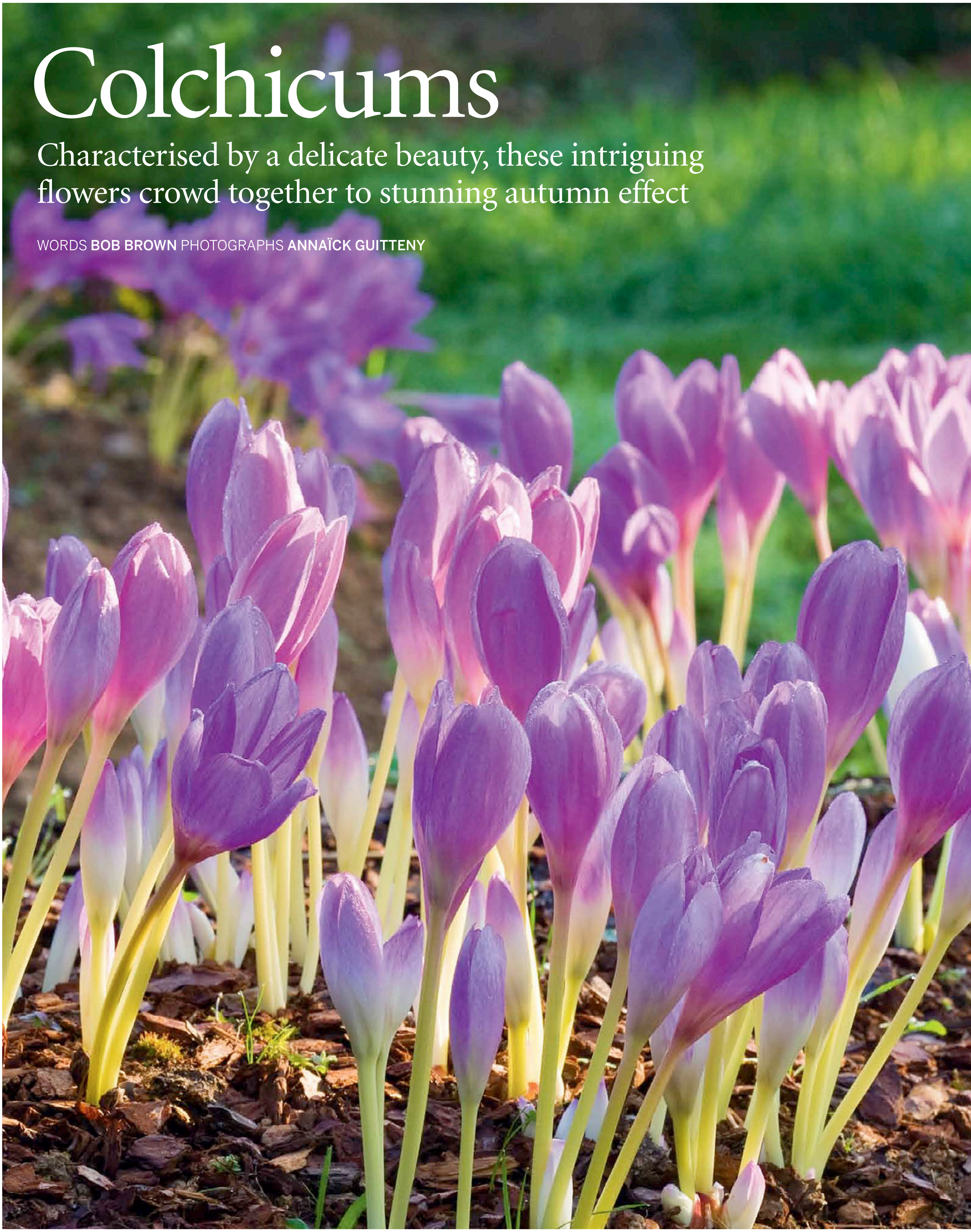
WEBSITE www.patrickhainessculptor.com GALLERY Patrick's work is exhibited at bo.lee gallery in Bath, or you can visit his studio's open day in May 2013. Spike Island Studios, 133 Cumberland Road, Bristol BS1 6UX; www.spikeisland.org.uk



Colchicums

Characterised by a delicate beauty, these intriguing flowers crowd together to stunning autumn effect

WORDS **BOB BROWN** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANNAÏCK GUITTENY**



In brief

WHAT **Popular perennial flowers known as autumn crocus.**
ORIGINS **Native to West Asia, Europe, East Africa and South Africa.**
SEASON **Autumn.**
SIZE **40-50cm high with a 20cm spread.**
CONDITIONS **Bears a variety of conditions.**

***COLCHICUM* 'THE GIANT'**
The flowers are imperceptibly larger than others and certainly don't have the sheer gravitas of doubles like 'Waterlily'. However, the colour is deep. Please note that colchicum heights vary little.

MARIANNE MAJERUS

Bob Brown owns Cotswold Garden Flowers, a mecca for plant lovers, which stocks a huge range of rare and beautiful plants

We had autumn crocuses at home when I was a kid. I must have been told that a drug – colchicine – was extracted from the bulb and was used for treating gout, and that the bulb was not a bulb but a corm, which is a modified stem rather than a shoot. Also that the plant was a member of the lily family rather than the iris family to which true crocuses belonged This was all true, but times change. Now the lily family has been split and colchicums sit in their own family, the *Colchicaceae*, and gout is treated with better drugs. I found and still find the flowers strange. Round here in Evesham they still call them 'nekked ladies'. It's their separateness, their lack of connection that makes them so intriguing. Slender fresh flowers no foliage, no greenness – they associate well with eruptions of mushrooms at the same season.

Their most typical phenology is to flower in late summer and autumn and leaf and fruit in spring then spend the summer dormant. Such patterns are at least partly understandable when you think about where they come from – places that are essentially hot and dry in summer, cold in winter with brief moist warm springs – such as the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and Asia. I've seen them wild in Kilkenny, in south-east Ireland but that was the commonest and most tolerant species – *Colchicum autumnale* (page 58) – which grows wild eastwards across Britain and Europe as far as the Ukraine and occurs naturally in dampish meadows. On the whole they come from open, sunny, rocky places with thin apparently poor soils. Beware! Such places are probably nutrient-rich, even if they lack much organic matter. They are hungry plants.

Like many men I've a tendency to collect. There are lots of species to grow (if you know where and how to get hold of them) but all the garden-worthy kinds look similar to everyone except the really ▷

*AGM – holds an award of garden merit from the royal horticultural society

> *"The sheer sensuality of single forms is wonderful, but doubles give more garden effect and last longer in flower because they're sterile"*

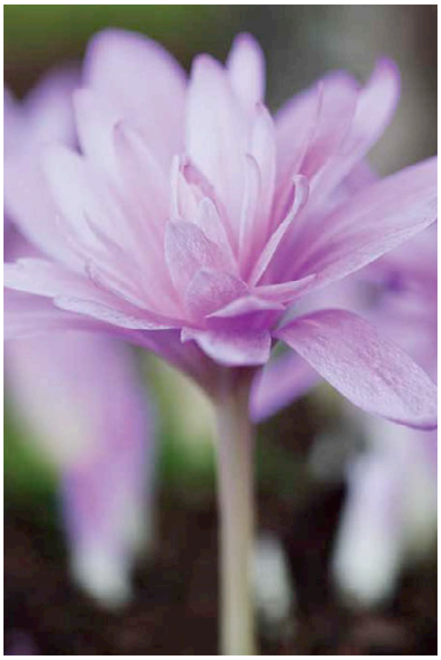
▷ obsessive collector. Even taxonomists scratch their heads a little – the chief problem being the disjunction between flowering, leafing and fruiting seasons, which has meant that herbarium specimens are inadequate. I look for ease of growth so I avoid the least hardy, which are *C. cupanii*, *C. variegatum* and *C. luteum* (Evesham gets about as cold as it gets in the whole of Britain). I'm also not a snob when it comes to doubleness.

Admittedly, the sheer sensuality of single forms is wonderful, but doubles give more garden effect and last longer in flower because they're sterile. Similarly big ones have more gravitas, so robust hybrids like 'The Giant' and 'Glory of Heemstede' (right) are worth growing. Be wary, some species such as *C. cupanii* and *C. stevenii* are very thin-petalled and virtually dissolve in British rain – they are best avoided by the general gardener. *Colchicum* 'Violet Queen' and *C.* 'Glory of Heemstede' and one or two others are also reckoned to be scented, but you'd need to have them in a jar on the kitchen table to appreciate them.

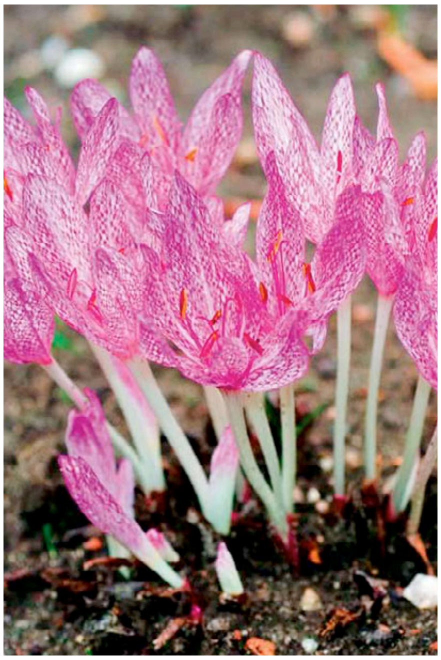
Don't be misled by names such as 'Violet Queen', 'Lilac Wonder' or *C. atropupureum* – colour varies little. *Colchicum luteum* is yellow-tepalled but only real obsessives, alpinists for example, with exceedingly superior growing skills could grow it. Most are either pinkish or purplish or pinkish-purplish or albino. Some whites are exceptionally good such as *C. speciosum* 'Album' (see page 57) for which demand is sufficiently high to push up its price.

The most important characteristic to vary is the ability of the flower to stand erect for longer than the briefest moment. *Colchicum speciosum* (page 58) is foremost and widely recognised for this characteristic but *C. tenorei* (page 58) and *C. cilicium* are also good. □

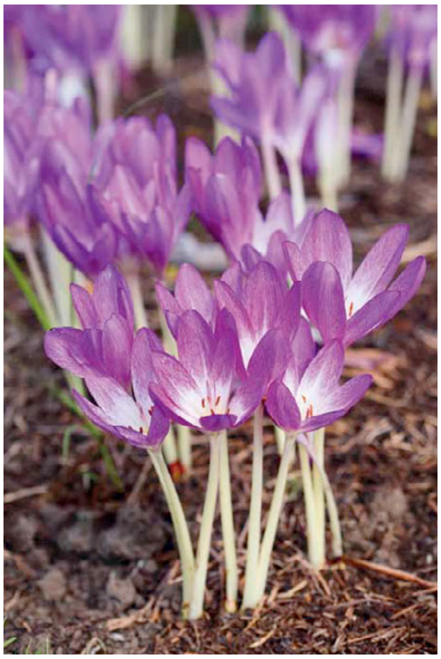
• Bob's pick of colchicums continues over the next six pages. ▷



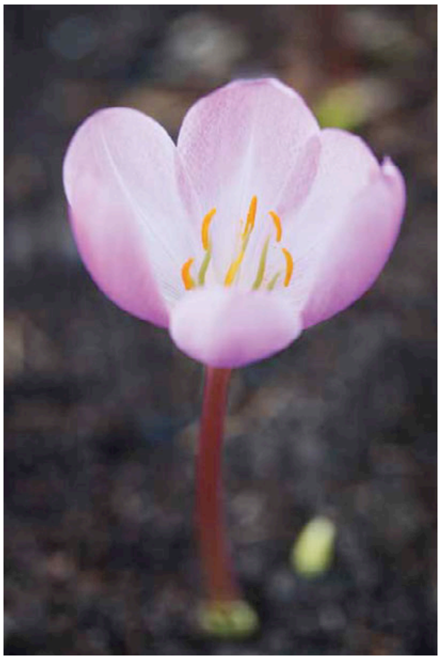
***COLCHICUM* 'WATERLILY'**
The cultivar with the most substantial flowers. Bred by JJ Kerbert in the 1950s, it has lost none of the vigour I've known since the 1970s. If I had to choose one this would be it. AGM*



C. GRAECUM
The best-developed and consistent tessellation, but not hardy. Alpinists grow it in cold frames and alpine houses but a sheltered pot during the coldest times would suffice.

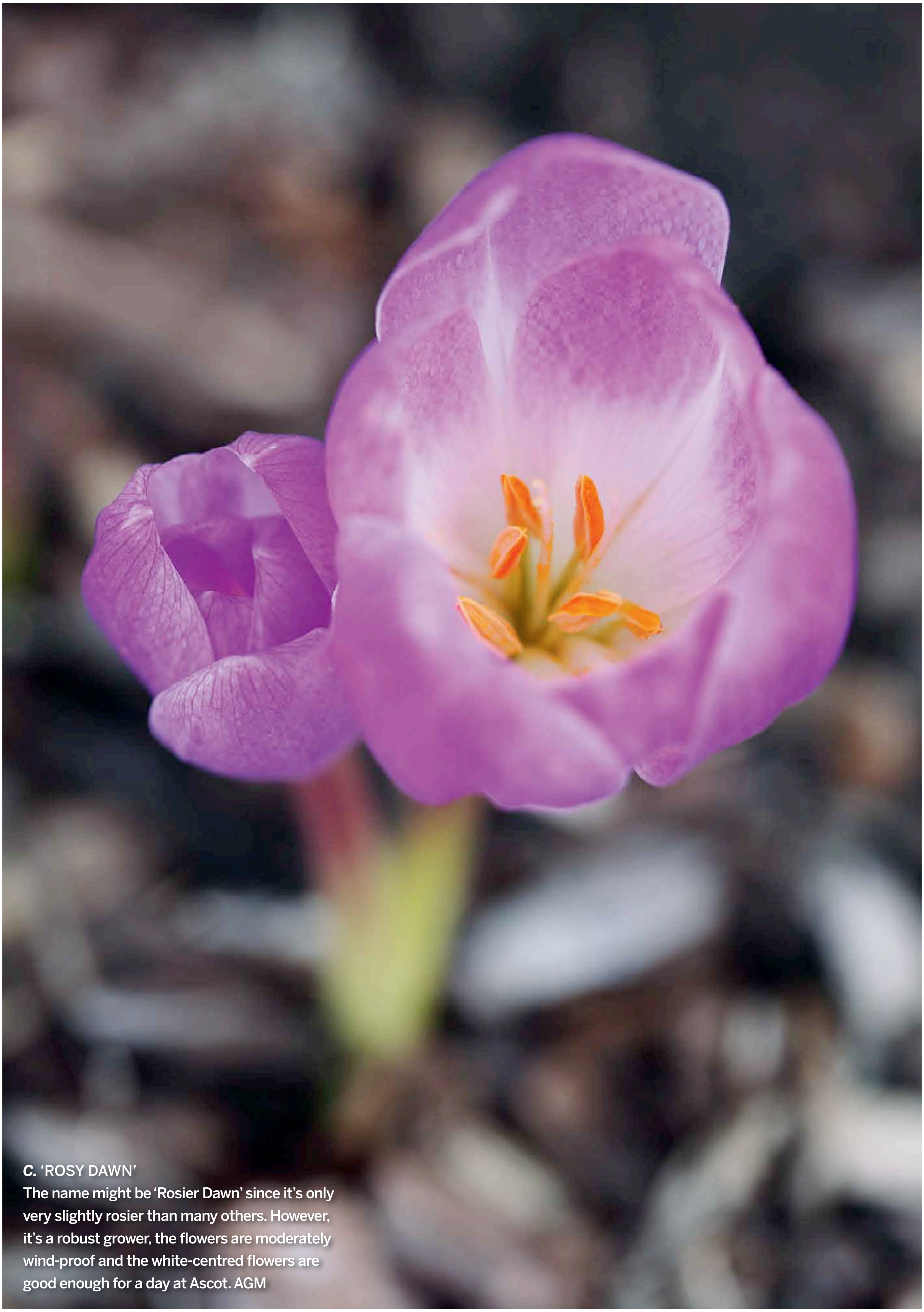


***C.* 'GLORY OF HEEMSTEDE'**
Selected by the Dutch plantsman JJ Kerbert back in the 1950s. It is similar to 'Apollo' in form and substance but the colour is deeper, the chequering less pronounced. AGM

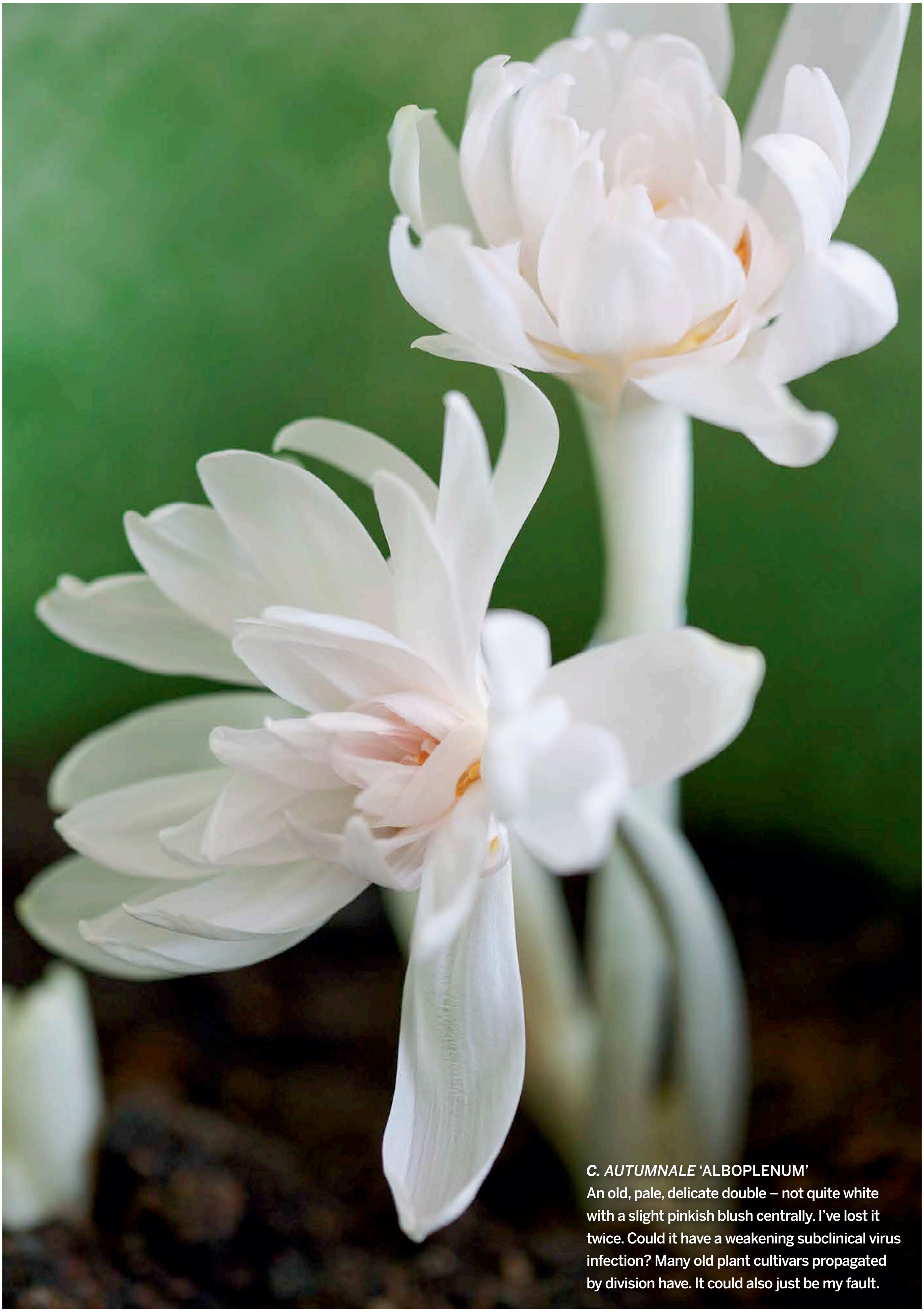


***C.* 'PINK GOBLET'**
A glass of botrytis riesling with a dash of cassis. It has a complicated strong sweet nose with undertones of rotting cabbage. The goblet lacks the sensual shape of other kinds. AGM

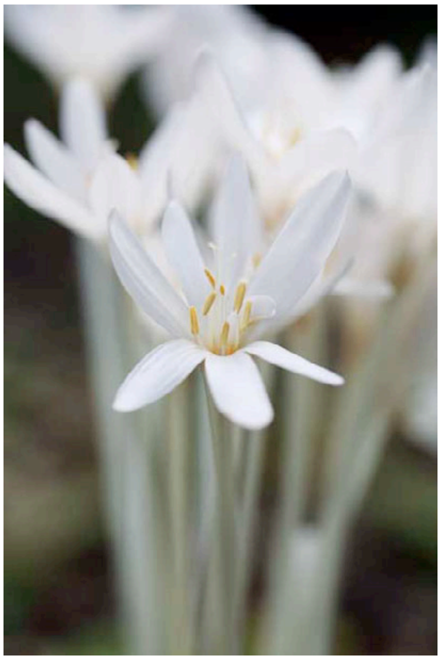
CROCUS GRAECUM IMAGE BY ORGANICA / ALAMY



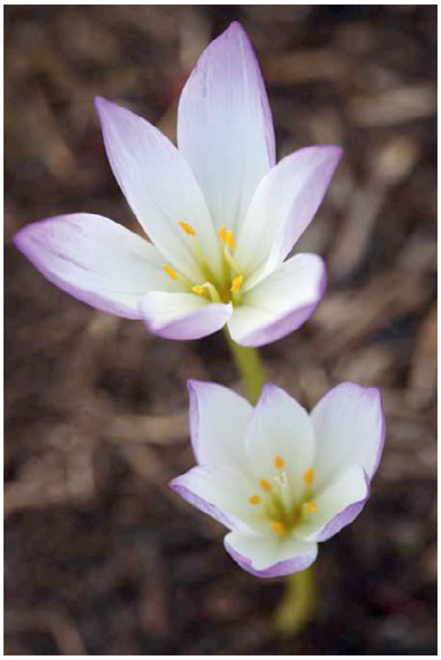
C. **'ROSY DAWN'**
The name might be 'Rosier Dawn' since it's only very slightly rosier than many others. However, it's a robust grower, the flowers are moderately wind-proof and the white-centred flowers are good enough for a day at Ascot. AGM



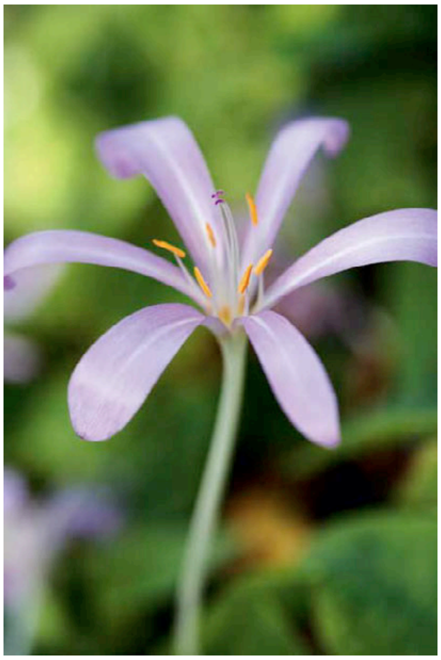
***C. AUTUMNALE* 'ALBOPLENUM'**
An old, pale, delicate double – not quite white with a slight pinkish blush centrally. I've lost it twice. Could it have a weakening subclinical virus infection? Many old plant cultivars propagated by division have. It could also just be my fault.



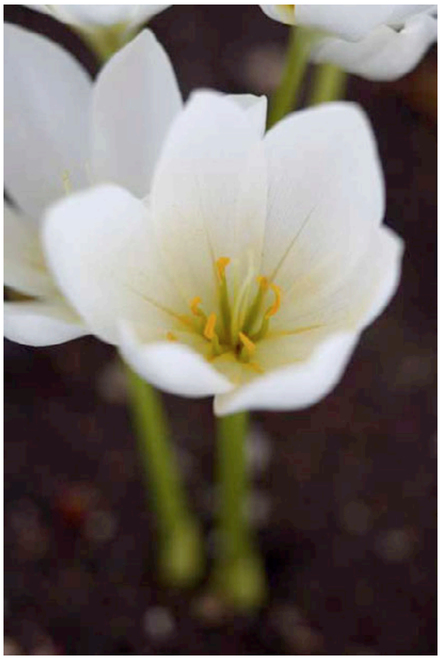
C. AUTUMNALE **'ALBUM'**
This is easy to grow and even naturalises as the species comes more or less true from seed. Patches of it naturalised in grassland look magical backlit by a low autumn sun.



C. **'ANTARES'**
Needs to be planted away from late-summer flowering distractions. Plain dark soil is as good a surround as any. The flowers flatten as they open.



C. PARNASSICUM
Shorter in flower than many, so it can stay upright for longer in stormy weather. Their starry shape looks refreshingly different. It needs warm sites in cold situations.



C. SPECIOSUM **'ALBUM'**
Deservedly the queen of the bunch. Holds upright with muscular poise, has a classical statuesque shape and is a garden plant that persists and slowly increases. AGM

Planting companions

How can you grow colchicums and cope with the flower's tendency to fall over and get muddied? Support isn't essential but it is preferable. Basically I grow them through a lower plant which will support, prevent mud-splash and hopefully show them off well. This lower plant also has to cope with big foliage shading it out in spring so it must be tough. Snow-in-summer *Cerastium tomentosum* is good and if you use the variety *columnae* it is less invasive. Its grey autumn foliage is the perfect foil for the soft pink-purple blooms of the colchicum. Even mats of lily-of-the-valley or *Vinca minor* do the same job.

Siting

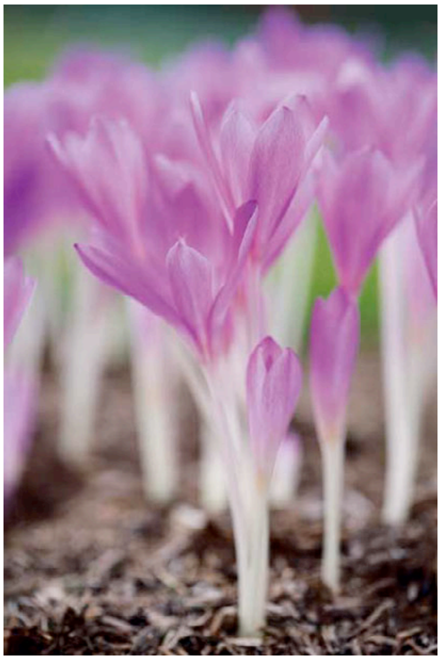
Colchicums' seasonality mean that if you grow them under deciduous trees in moderate shade they get a summer drying because the tree roots suck out the moisture. They flower in the autumn and leaf and fade in the light before the tree regains its full canopy. In truly wet places in Britain this works really well, alleviating deaths due to summer wetness. In the southern half of Britain it's useful because furnishing dry shade with garden plants is not easy. If you exclude the species that alpinists grow, most are truly bomb-proof and will also grow in other places like shrubberies (where they look extremely Victorian), herbaceous borders and little out-of-the-way corners by paths and buildings. When you're desperate for planting spaces, don't mistake the dormant patch for a gap. I have at least once driven a spade through a clump. ▷

Mark them well with a late-appearing herbaceous plant that's finished by summer's end. This will furnish the space between the leaves disappearing and flowering. It will also give a signal to the spade-wielder. Continuity of effect is very important in small gardens. The two plants will never compete for light, air or water and any potential nutrient conflict will have been sorted by the Growmore that you scattered in March.

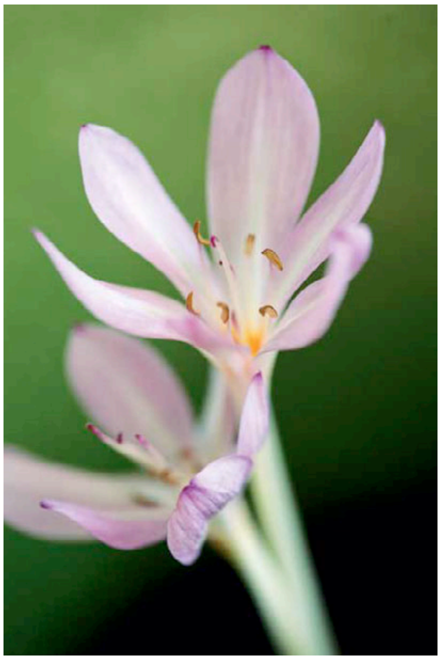
Roscoeas are good companions, as are *Lilium nepalense* and *Arisaema candidissimum*. Practical gardening and a little biochemistry might go well together here. Colchicums are known to secrete gibberellins, a growth hormone that leads to doubling of chromosomes. It has been recorded that plants growing with the autumn crocus are larger and more robust. You might get lucky.

Propagation

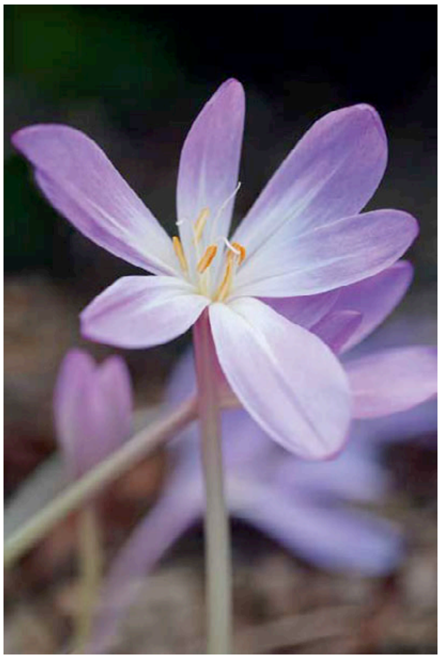
Colchicums really do look better en masse. The bulbs are more expensive than tulips but are still cheap enough to buy in quantity from a good Dutch wholesaler. Buy them early and plant quickly. If you like to increase your own stock dig them up and spread them around just before growth begins in midsummer. The ground might be hard and you'll need a long fork. They'll be deeper than you imagined. Alternatively look for seed in spring and sow it immediately. Leave the sown seed somewhere outside that's cool and shady. Prick them out when they've formed dormant bulbs a year or two later. They quickly lose their ability to germinate so don't bother buying any seed that has got as far as a packet.



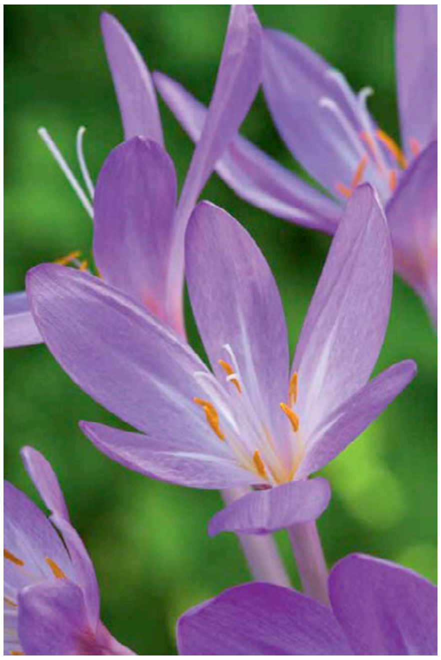
C. TENOREI
The flowers seem more numerous than other kinds. It's native to Southern Italy from where it was first introduced into cultivation in the mid-19th century. AGM



C. AUTUMNALE
Native to grassland and thin woodland in England, Wales and SE Ireland. It has been cultivated for the longest, is the commonest in British gardens and has most cultivars.

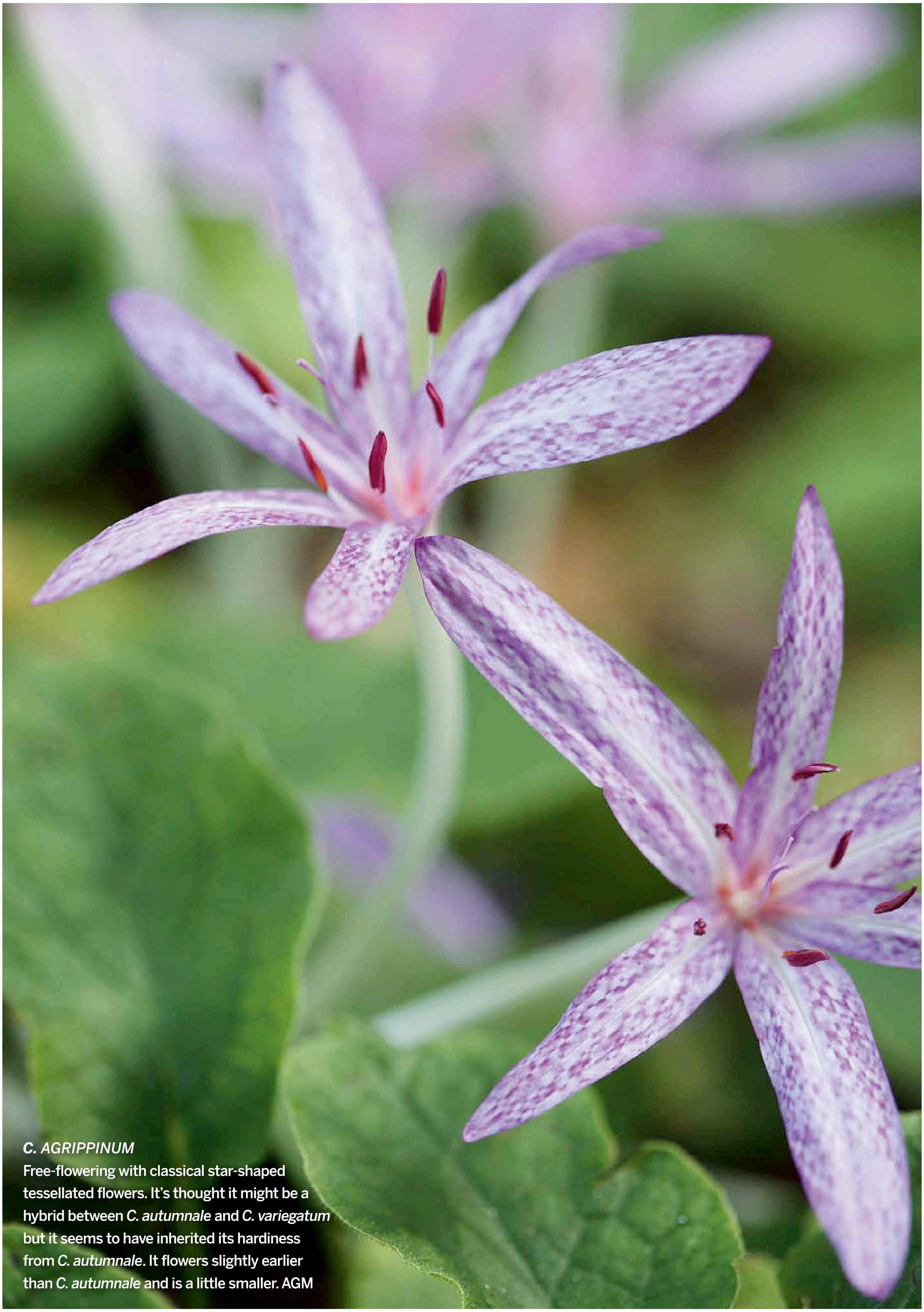


C. SPECIOSUM
One of the most important garden species chiefly because its thick-petalled flowers are substantial enough to stand well, even through battering wind and pelting rain. AGM



***C. AUTUMNALE* 'NANCY LINDSAY'**
Nancy Lindsay had a small nursery near Hidcote Manor after the Second World War. The cultivar is tall, strongly coloured, early to flower, and without tessellation. AGM

CROCUS AUTUMNAL 'NANCY LINDSAY' IMAGE BY JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS



C. AGRIPPINUM

Free-flowering with classical star-shaped tessellated flowers. It's thought it might be a hybrid between *C. autumnale* and *C. variegatum* but it seems to have inherited its hardiness from *C. autumnale*. It flowers slightly earlier than *C. autumnale* and is a little smaller. AGM

Peter Beales

Our continued love affair with classic roses is due in large part to this gentleman; his name is now synonymous with the flower

WORDS TIM RICHARDSON PHOTOGRAPH CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Arriving at Peter Beales's Norfolk nursery, I am slightly surprised to be told, “He's in the bistro.” I had imagined I might find this elder statesman of the horticultural industry, a former president of the Royal National Rose Society, wielding secateurs in a shrubbery somewhere.

But there he is, in the small restaurant adjoining the four-acre display garden. An imposing bearded figure with kindly eyes, Peter clearly relishes his hands-on role despite being officially semi-retired – his son and daughter now run the rose nursery he founded some 45 years ago in Attleborough. So why roses?

“When I left school in 1951 [at the age of 15], there was very little choice in terms of jobs,” he says. “I could have been a bricklayer or a farm labourer. I had a Saturday job locally at LeGrice rose nursery and they offered me a full-time position.” Peter happily admits he opted for old roses when he set up his own business in 1970 because he recognised there was a growing niche in the market for them. About a decade earlier a group of horticulturists led by Graham Stuart Thomas had begun promoting a connoisseurial ‘cult’ around these romantic plants, which seemed a world away from the hybrid teas and floribundas associated with the 1940s and 50s.

> *“After our first Chelsea in 1971, I looked at the order book, and almost every one was for old-fashioned roses”*

Peter worked under Thomas at Hillings Nursery in Surrey before setting up on his own, at first offering ‘modern’ as well as ‘old-fashioned’ roses at his nursery, though he says this turned out to be a mistake. “After our first Chelsea in 1971,” he recalls, “I looked at the order book, and almost every one was for old-fashioned roses.” So Peter settled down to breed and market ‘classic’ rose varieties, many with impossibly romantic names – a childhood favourite was ‘Maiden's Blush’, which he was later shocked to discover is known in France as ‘Cuisse de Nymphe Émue’ , or ‘Thigh of the Aroused Nymph’.

Rose breeding and selling has always been an intensely competitive arena, and Peter acknowledges that publicity can provide the edge. He recalls with a cringe that his first public-relations coup was opportunistically naming a new rose ‘Miss World’, after he discovered the beauty queen was coming to the Royal Norfolk Show. But as he points out, new roses are “the only way to get publicity”.

Peter predictably has no time for those who label all roses disease-prone, arguing instead that a few black spots on leaves should not turn roses into pariah plants. Perhaps more surprisingly, he declares himself a supporter of the organic movement: at his own nursery they do not spray at all “because there are too many chemicals being thrown at roses – they can acclimatise and adapt without being sprayed”. His real focus as a breeder is on the fortitude of his plants: “The future of roses is healthy roses,” he asserts.

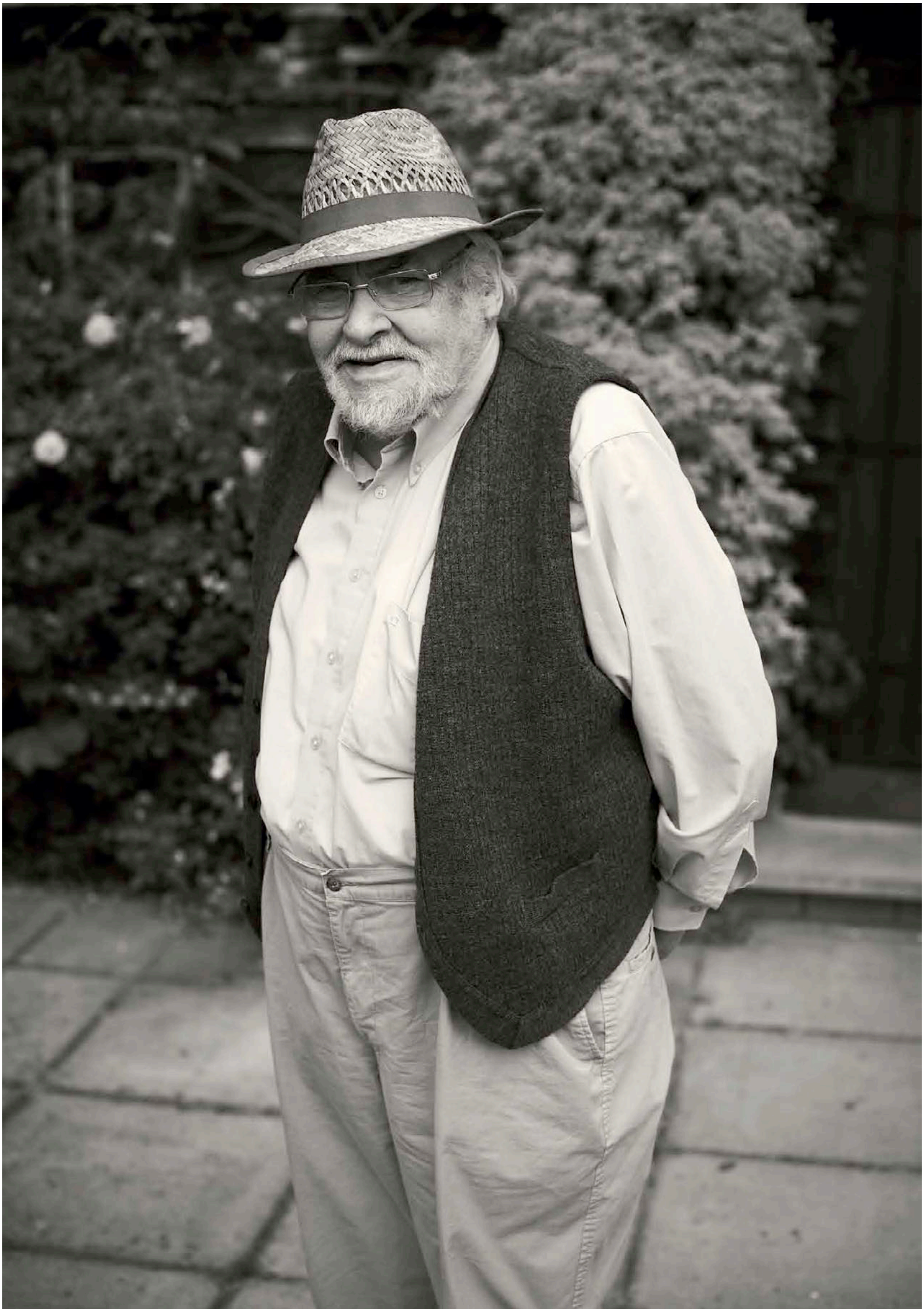
A few minutes into our conversation Peter tells me that Joan, his wife of 52 years, died just a few days earlier. One can only imagine how he was feeling, and it is a measure of the man that he was still able to countenance our interview, ranging as it did across his entire working life, when Joan had been at his side throughout, doing everything from potting up plants, to typing up the manuscripts of his books. Peter wanted to make sure that I understood Joan had been a key part of the success of the nursery.

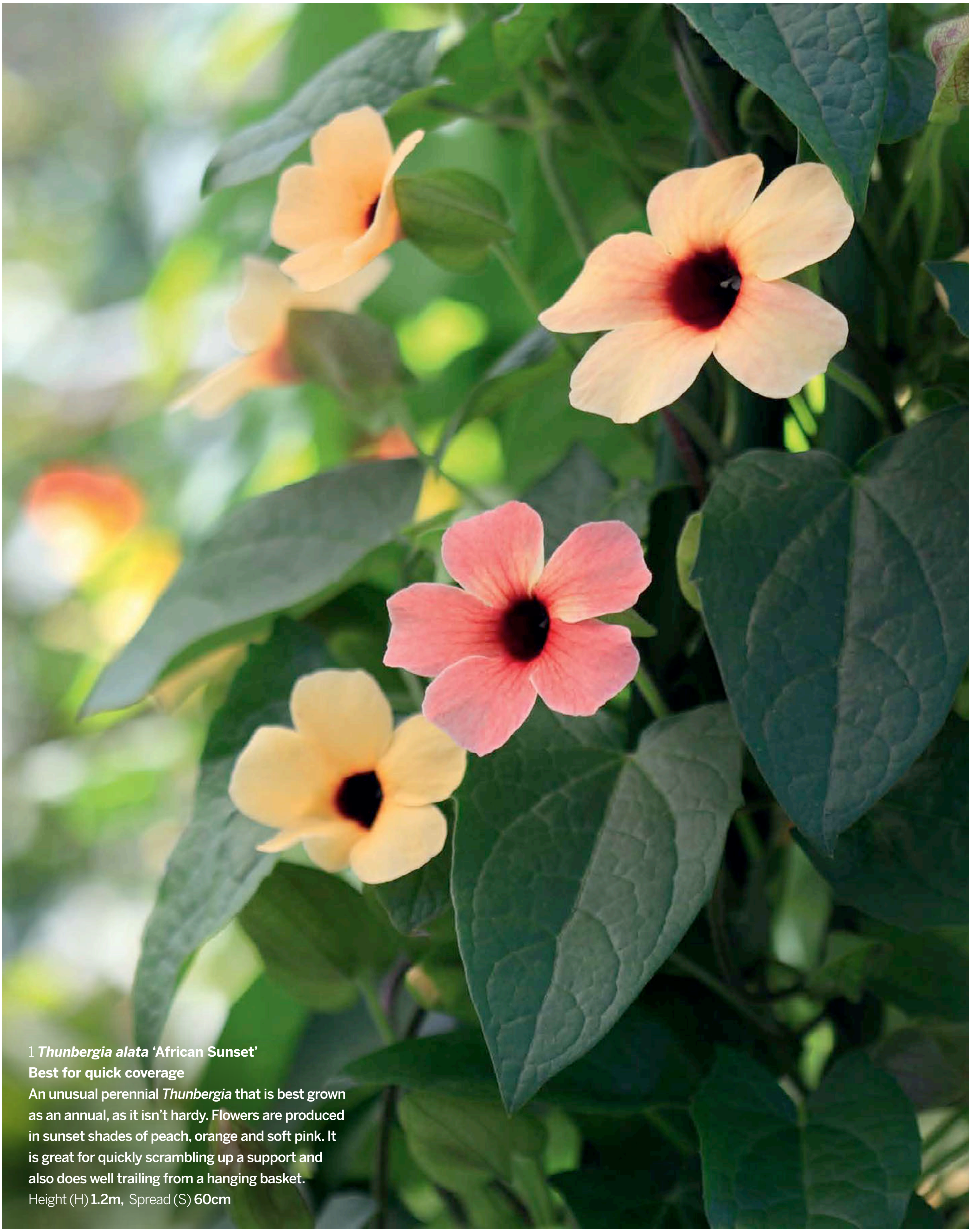
There is another painful topic. Peter's mother returned from domestic service in London in order to give birth – he was born illegitimately. This may not sound like much today but it is all too easy to underestimate the stigma of this in the past. In his autobiography if not in conversation Peter candidly admits that the circumstance of his birth has been something that has dogged him. Which is not to imply that he is a dour sort of person. He relates the occasion when ‘Debbo’, the Duchess of Devonshire, on being introduced to Mr and Mrs Beales at the Sandringham Flower Show, exclaimed, “Goodness, it's like meeting Posh and Becks!” He also recalls with relish the occasion when the writer of a (rare) letter of complaint signed herself off as ‘an unsatisfactory customer’.

Peter is an impressive person in all sorts of ways, but it is as an entrepreneur that he really stands out, having built his business from scratch and made it into an internationally recognised brand. He did not get into rose-breeding entirely for money, but he didn't do it entirely for love, either. As many in the nursery business would acknowledge, that can be a difficult balance to strike.

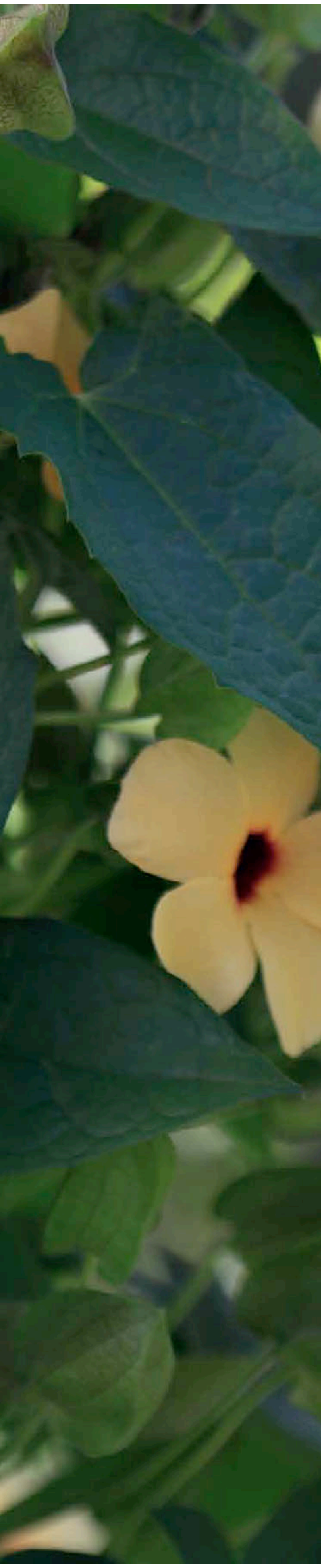
• www.classicroses.co.uk

NEXT MONTH Designer Jinny Blom





1 ***Thunbergia alata* 'African Sunset'**
Best for quick coverage
An unusual perennial *Thunbergia* that is best grown as an annual, as it isn't hardy. Flowers are produced in sunset shades of peach, orange and soft pink. It is great for quickly scrambling up a support and also does well trailing from a hanging basket.
Height (H) **1.2m,** Spread (S) **60cm**



Reaching for the heavens

They have plenty of practical uses and can adorn almost any size garden. Are you making the most of climbers?

WORDS **LIA LENDEERTZ** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANNAÏCK GUITTENY**

Lia Lendeertz is an allotmenteer and gardening writer

Climbers are egalitarian garden features: their tiny footprint means that there are few gardeners who couldn't squeeze in one or two more. No matter how humble your space, you can always go up. For every wisteria-like brute requiring an entire Georgian house façade to romp across there is a delicate annual *Ipomoea lobata*, daintily scrambling up any support, flowering its heart out, and tidily dying off as frosts hit.

Some places beg for climbers. The larch-lap fencing panels down one side of my garden screamed out to be replaced when I first moved in. A few select climbers turned out to be by far the cheaper option. Now they are coated in the smooth, glossy leaves of a *Hedera algeriensis* 'Gloire de Marengo'. Not the classiest of climbers, but it turns the suburban fencing into a slim-line hedge, if you squint a little. Others taking advantage of my fence shame include a fragrant honeysuckle and several clematis.

But in other places climbers are less necessity and more luxury, and I find myself in the position of having to create places especially for climbers. Happily it does a garden no harm at all to have a few structures on which climbers can elegantly drape themselves. It seems unlikely that a few pieces of wood hammered together would create a feeling of enclosure and intimacy, but create it they do. Close to the house I have a veranda covered in a pergola on which clambers hefty *Vitis* 'Boskoop Glory' and the slow-growing but large, sweetly scented evergreen jasmine *Trachelospermum jasminoides*, which loves the extra protection near the house. Also adding to the feeling of enclosure is an archway up which scrambles a perennial sweet pea, and a pair of obelisks each housing a wineberry and a clematis. In fact clematis spring up all over the garden, seeing as most are happy to scramble up through shrubs and even be lead up trees, so keeping the need for further expensive structures to a minimum.

But on visiting Tynings Nursery in Somerset I find that there are a couple of categories of climber I have been missing out on. Nursery owner Jane Lindsay is particularly keen on those climbers that need a little heat and protection over winter, perhaps in a heated greenhouse but more perfectly making themselves at home in a conservatory that is heated through the winter. "They are the most varied and colourful of the climbers and I love them."

Jane's other favourites are annual climbers. "Annuals such as *Ipomoea* 'Star of Yalta' are interesting, unusual and flower all summer," she says. These are the ones you can press gang into swiftly beautifying an ugly garage wall, or run through another climber. Though there are plenty of true annuals that are worth growing, several perennials are best treated as annuals in cold climates, as they die when the frosts arrive. They need to be sown in heat at the beginning of each year and nurtured until all chance of frosts have passed, before being planted out against a support.

A third favourite category of Jane's falls somewhere between the other two: those climbers bordering on tender that will survive and often thrive out of doors if planted in a sheltered, sunny spot with great drainage. These are plants that will flower their hearts out in return for just a touch of jeopardy. Climbers such as *Campsis* x *tagliabuana* 'Madame Galen' with huge trumpet-shaped orange blooms certainly look like they should be confined to the heated conservatory but in fact can stand their ground in the garden, if only given the correct sort of garden. "Just stunningly beautiful," says Jane, "and no more trouble than a clematis or a jasmine if you can find the right place."

TURN OVER FOR MORE OF LIA'S FAVOURITES ▷

2 ***Tropaeolum perigrinum***

Best for quick but delicate growth

Small, lobed, rounded leaves of greyish green are the perfect foil for the tassled bright yellow flowers. This annual will go from nothing to fence-smothering proportions in a season, but as an annual will never get out of hand.
H 3m, S 2m

3 ***Sollya heterophylla* 'Alba'**

Best for a cold greenhouse

The white form of the Australian bluebell plant produces its dainty, white, hanging bell flowers from June to September. It needs a very sheltered spot, and is best grown in a cold greenhouse, either in winter or year round.
H 3m, S 2m

4 ***Billardiera longiflora***

Best for beautiful berries

Tiny, nondescript, whitish-green flowers are followed by gorgeous purple-blue berries throughout summer and into autumn. Hardy, as long as it is given a well-drained soil, *Billardiera* also does well in a cool, unheated greenhouse.
H 2-3m, S 1m AGM*

5 ***Ceropegia sandersonii***

Best for the conservatory

The flowers are curiosities and have an alien beauty; they also serve as a pitfall trap for pollinating insects. Succulent leaves. House in a heated conservatory in semi-shade.
H 1.5m S 0.5m

6 ***Campsis* x *tagliabuana* 'Madame Galen'**

Best for exotic flowers

A hugely exuberant climber smothered in bold, orange trumpet flowers. Not fully hardy but worth reserving in your most favoured and sheltered corner. Large amounts of growth each year need full sun in order to ripen and flower.
H 10m, S 1.8m AGM

7 ***Jasminum officinale* 'Clotted Cream'**

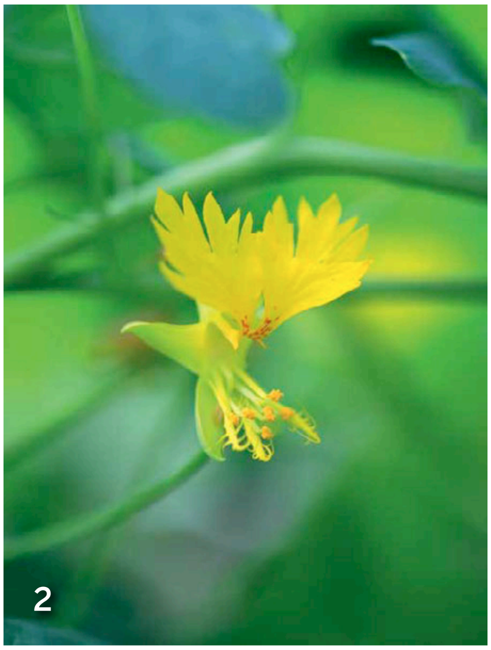
Best for scent

A creamy cultivar of jasmine. Sweetly fragrant flowers are produced abundantly from late June throughout summer, and in a sheltered spot the foliage is evergreen through winter. A shrubby climber that needs support as it doesn't twine.
H 5m, S 3m

8 ***Lonicera* x *brownii* 'Dropmore Scarlet'**

Best for partial shade

The most spectacular of the honeysuckles: deepest pink-red tubes of flowers have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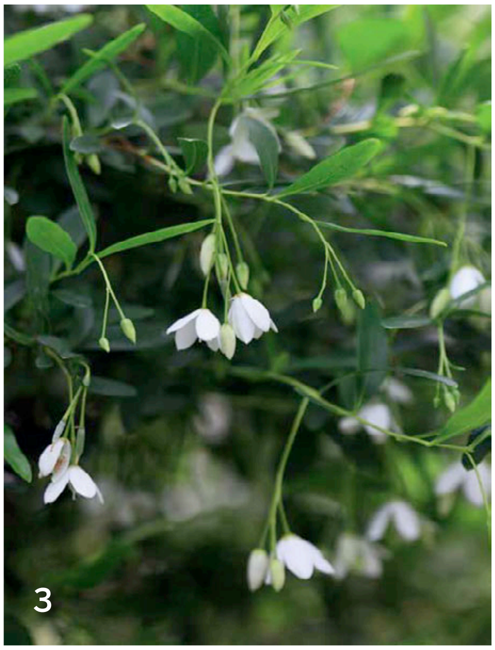
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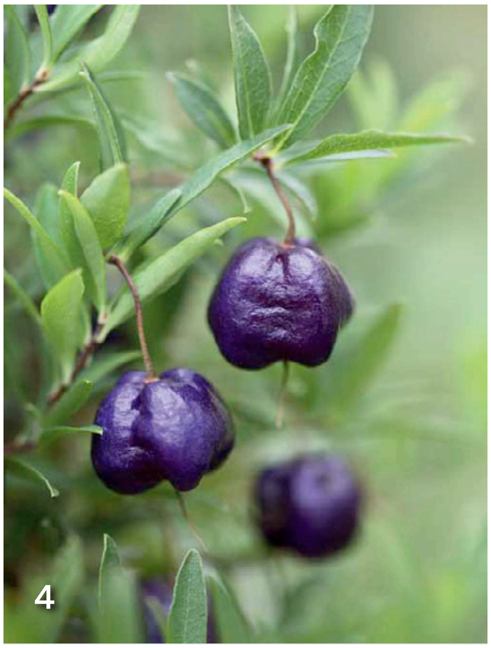
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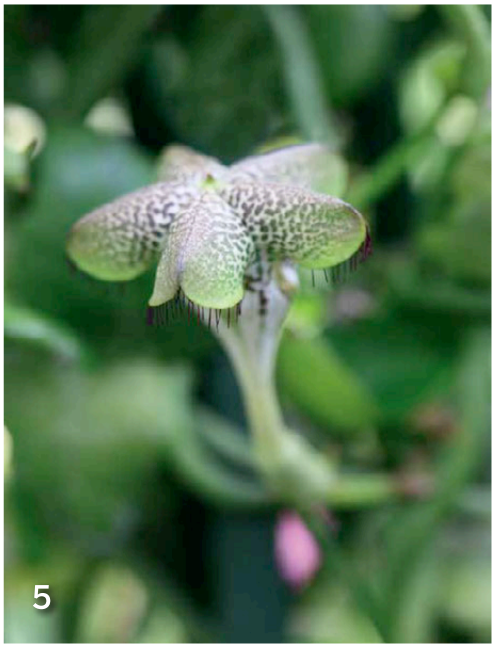
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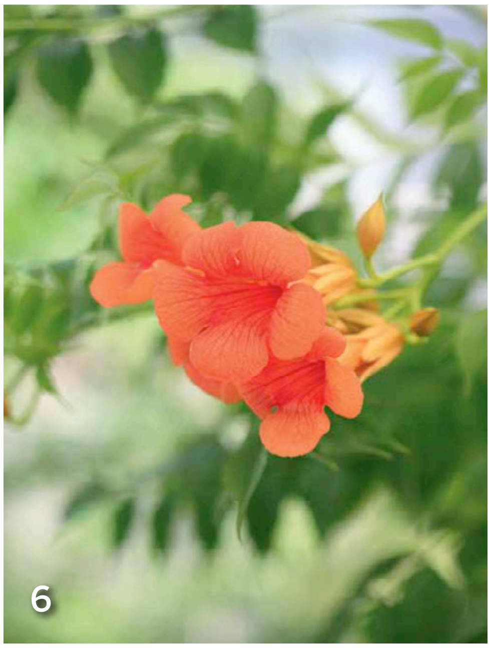
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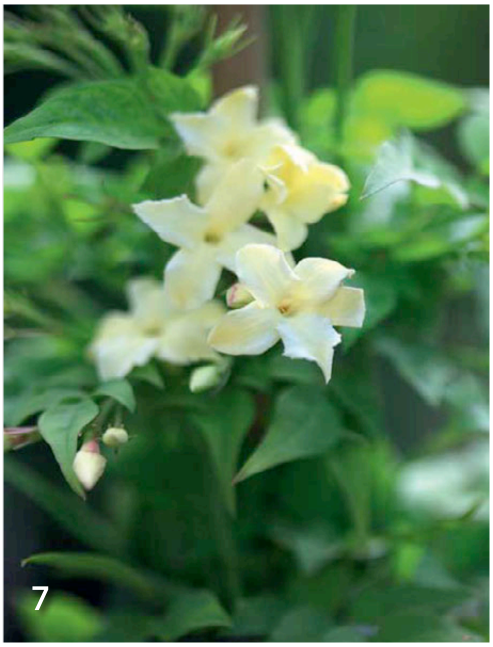
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*HOLDS AN AWARD OF GARDEN MERIT FROM THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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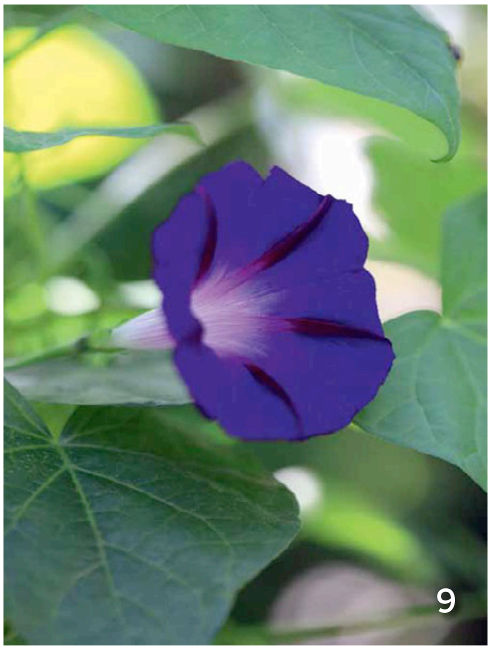
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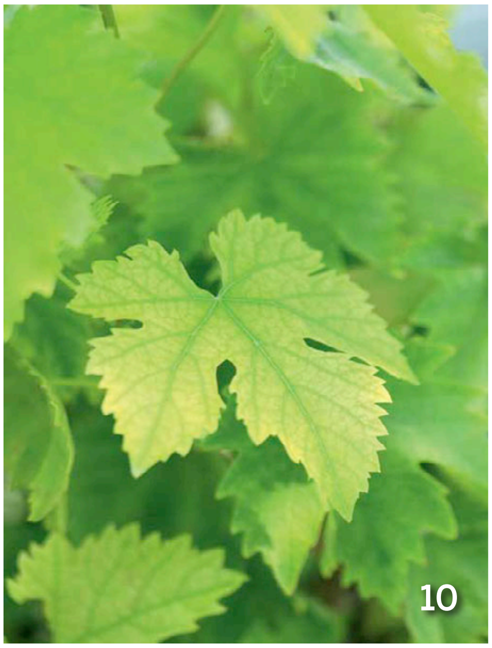
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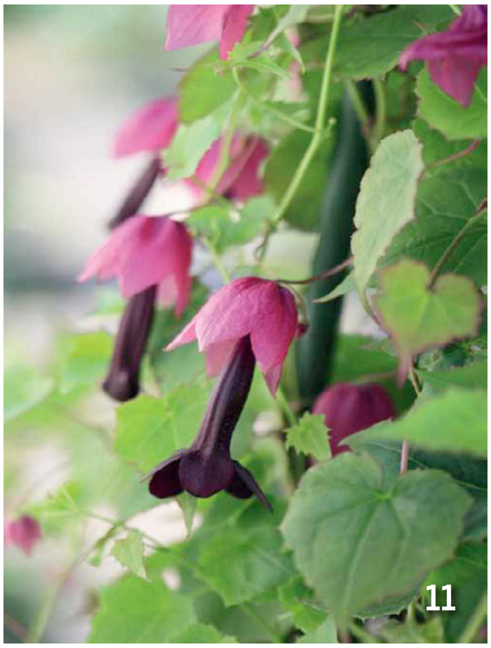
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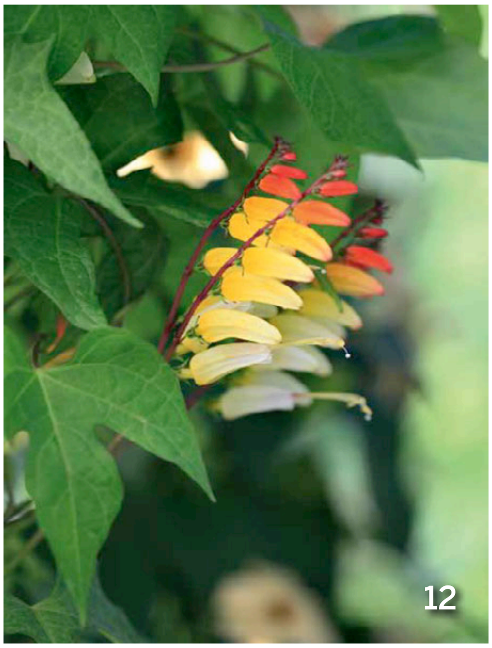
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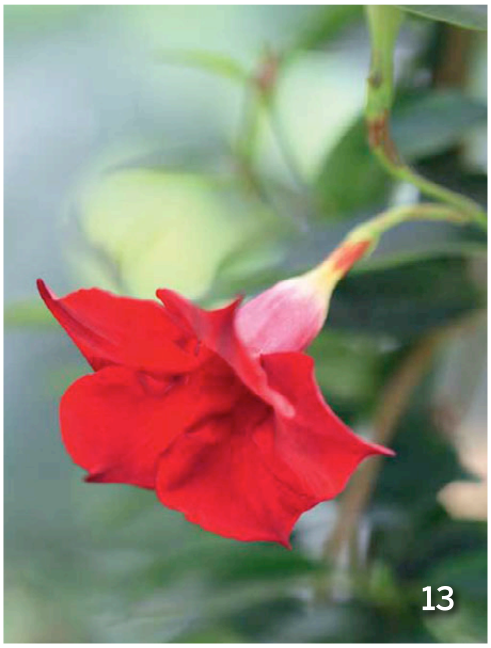
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8 MARTIN HUGHES-JONES/ GAP PHOTOS

contrasting bright orange insides. The pay-off is an almost complete lack of scent. Provides a welcome splash of colour in semi-shade.
H 4m, S 1m

9 ***Ipomoea*** **'Star of Yalta'**

Best for scrambling through shrubs

The silky petals of these deep and vibrant purple blue flowers are made even more striking by pale white centres. It can climb a support or cascade from a container, and will also happily romp through other plants.
H 2m, S 1m

10 ***Humulus lupulus*** **'Aureus'**

Best for foliage

This perennial climber has yellow, shapely, deeply lobed leaves and an elegant manner. It dies down to the ground each winter, which means that the growth can simply be cut away and composted while you wait for new shoots.
H 6m, S 1.5m

11 ***Rhodochiton atrosanguineum***

Best for late summer flowers

This stunning climber produces its striking dark and medium purple flowers over a long period in summer. Most often grown as an annual – in which case it hits its stride later in the year – in very sheltered spots it may survive over winter.
H 2m, S 0.5m AGM

12 ***Ipomoea lobata***

Best for quick colour

Commonly known as the Spanish flag for its yellow and red pennant-like flowers (with a touch of orange, but never mind), *Ipomoea* lobata is a great quick annual for bright and bold colour. Will cover an obelisk in no time.
H 2m, S 0.3m

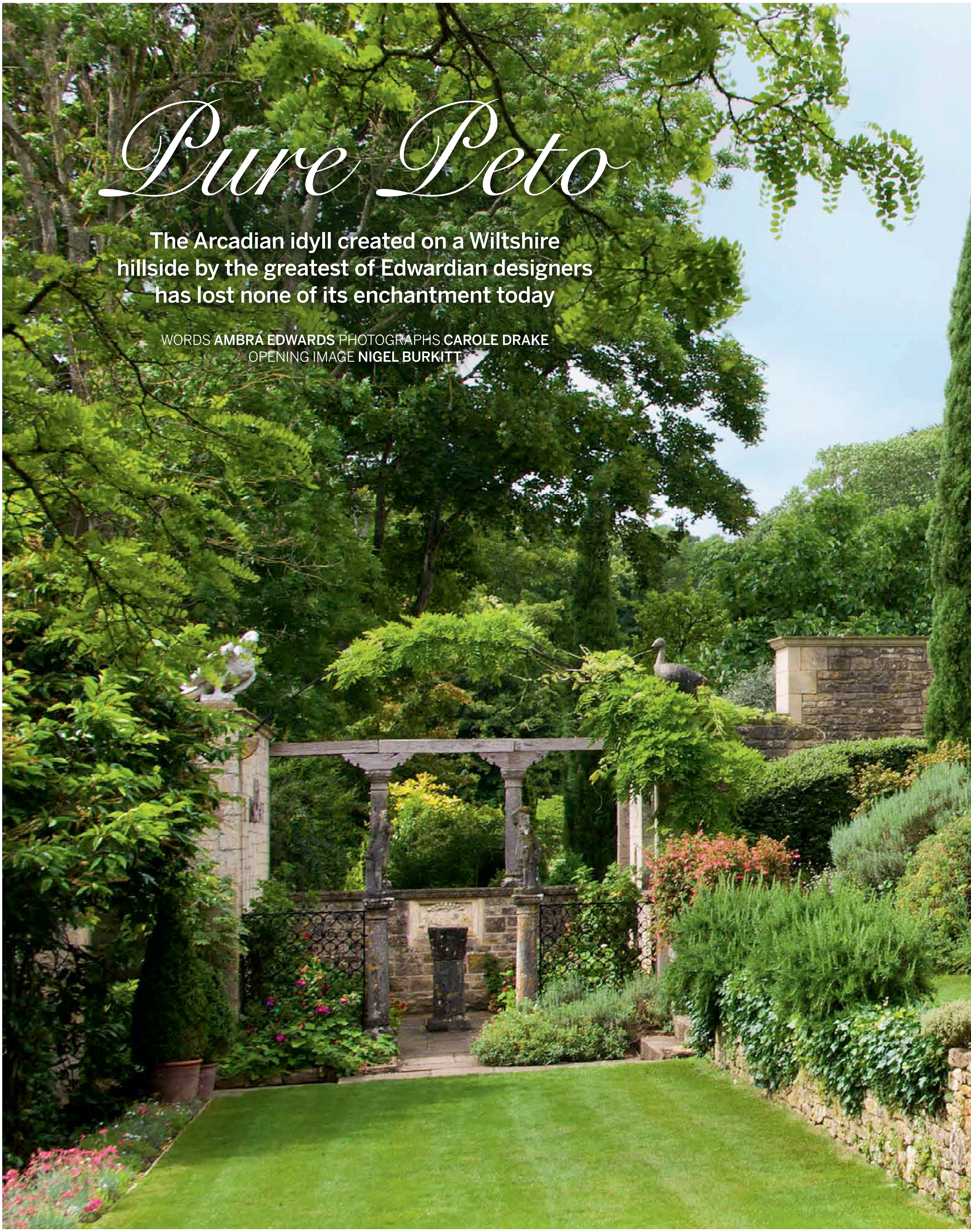
13 ***Mandevilla splendens***

Best for the conservatory

Under cover and given warmth in winter this velvety beauty can flower for up to ten months of the year. Plant into a conservatory border and feed and water generously throughout the summer months.
H 4m, S 2m

RECOMMENDED SUPPLIERS

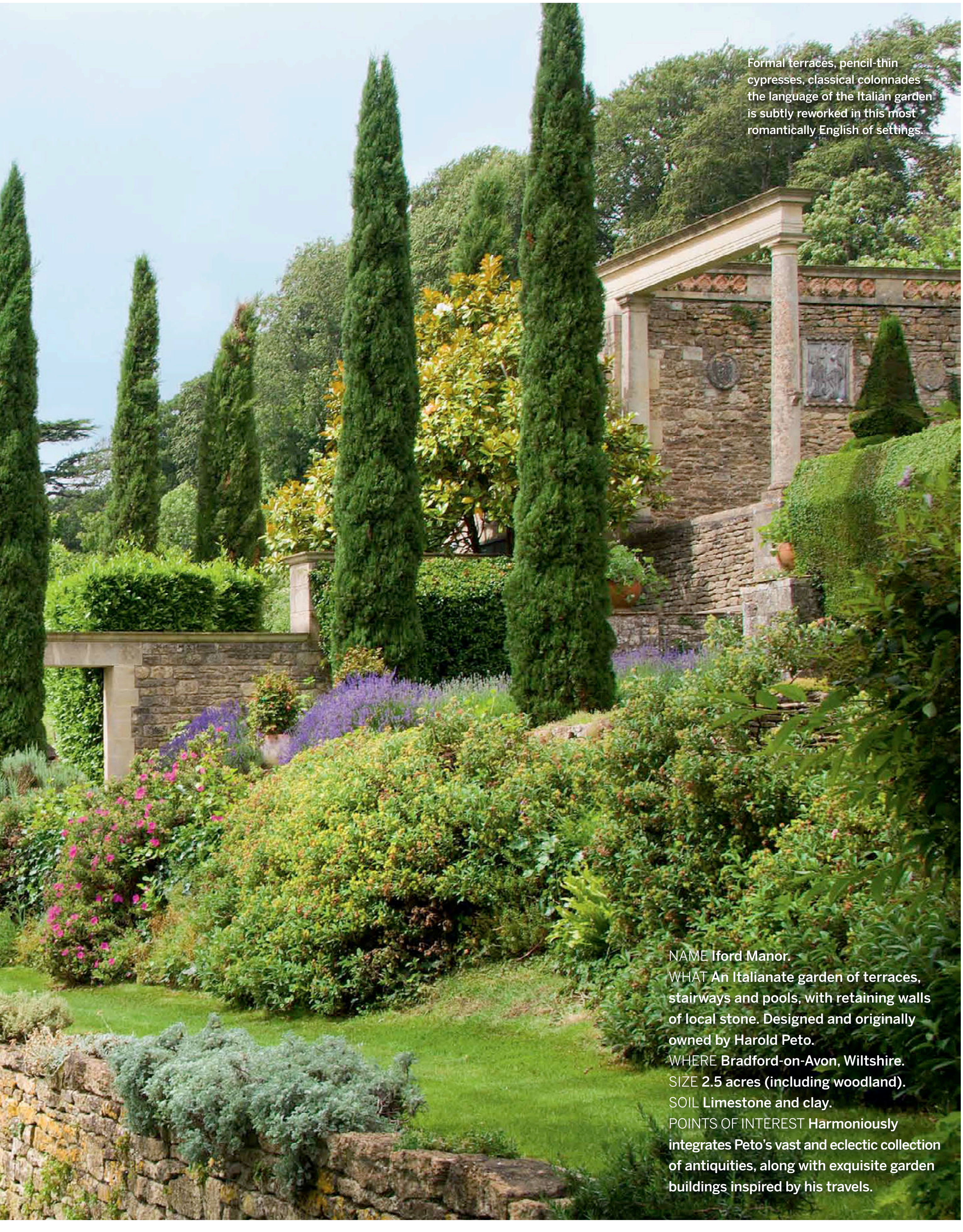
For conservatory and greenhouse climbers:
Tynings Nursery, 111 Clevedon Road,
Tickenham, North Somerset BS21 6RE
Tel 01275 852439
For clematis and other climbers: Priorswood clematis www.priorswoodclematis.co.uk



Pure Peto

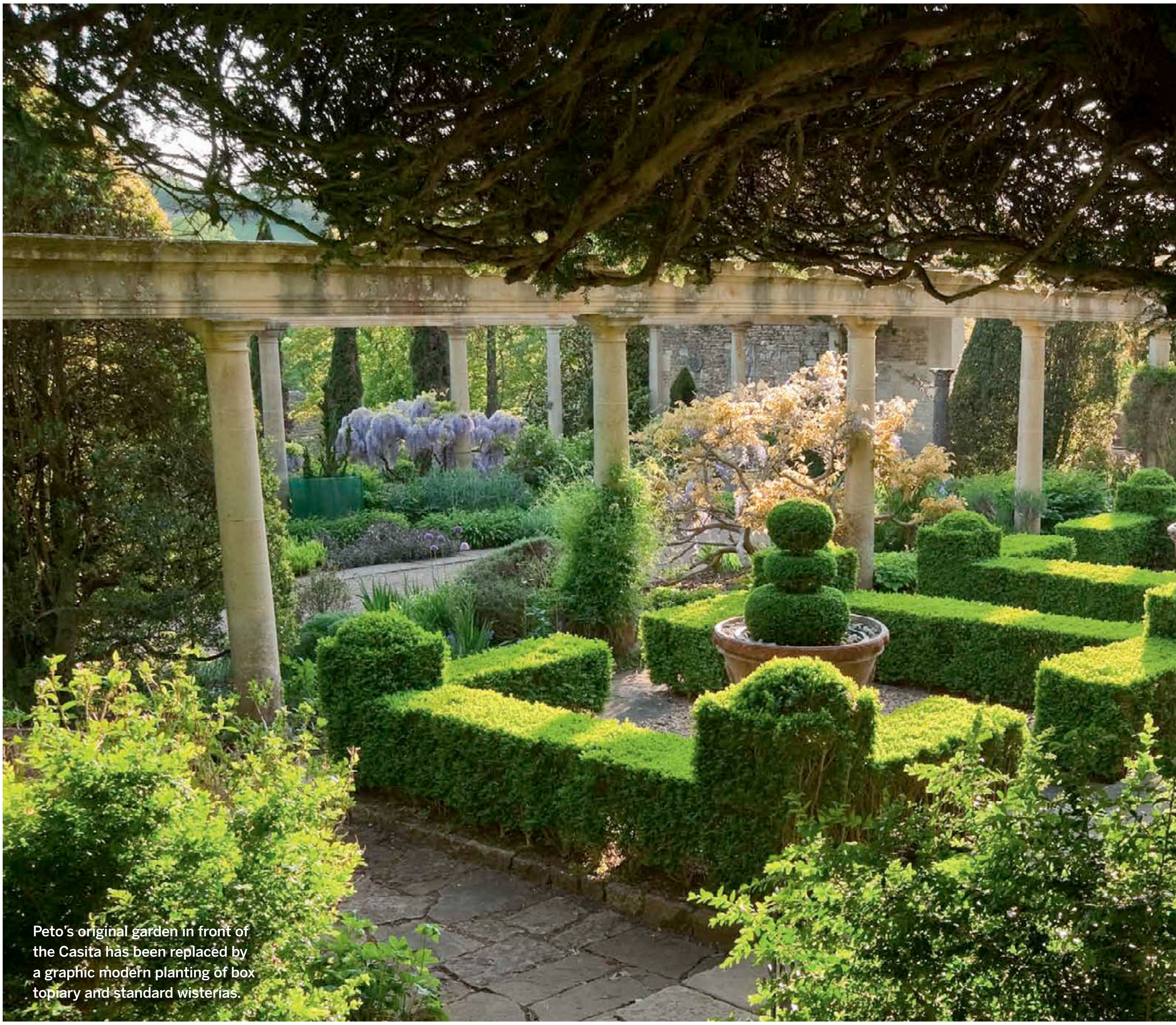
The Arcadian idyll created on a Wiltshire hillside by the greatest of Edwardian designers has lost none of its enchantment today

WORDS **AMBRA EDWARDS** PHOTOGRAPHS **CAROLE DRAKE**
OPENING IMAGE **NIGEL BURKITT**

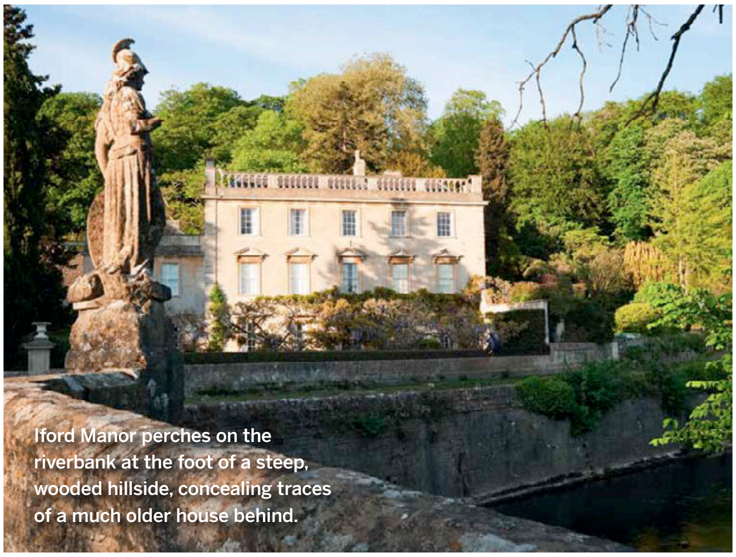


Formal terraces, pencil-thin cypresses, classical colonnades – the language of the Italian garden is subtly reworked in this most romantically English of settings.

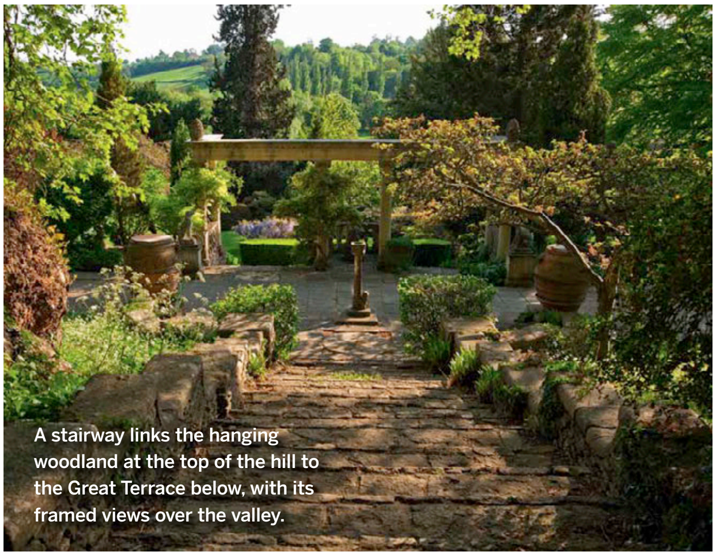
NAME **Iford Manor.**
WHAT **An Italianate garden of terraces, stairways and pools, with retaining walls of local stone. Designed and originally owned by Harold Peto.**
WHERE **Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire.**
SIZE **2.5 acres (including woodland).**
SOIL **Limestone and clay.**
POINTS OF INTEREST **Harmoniously integrates Peto's vast and eclectic collection of antiquities, along with exquisite garden buildings inspired by his travels.**



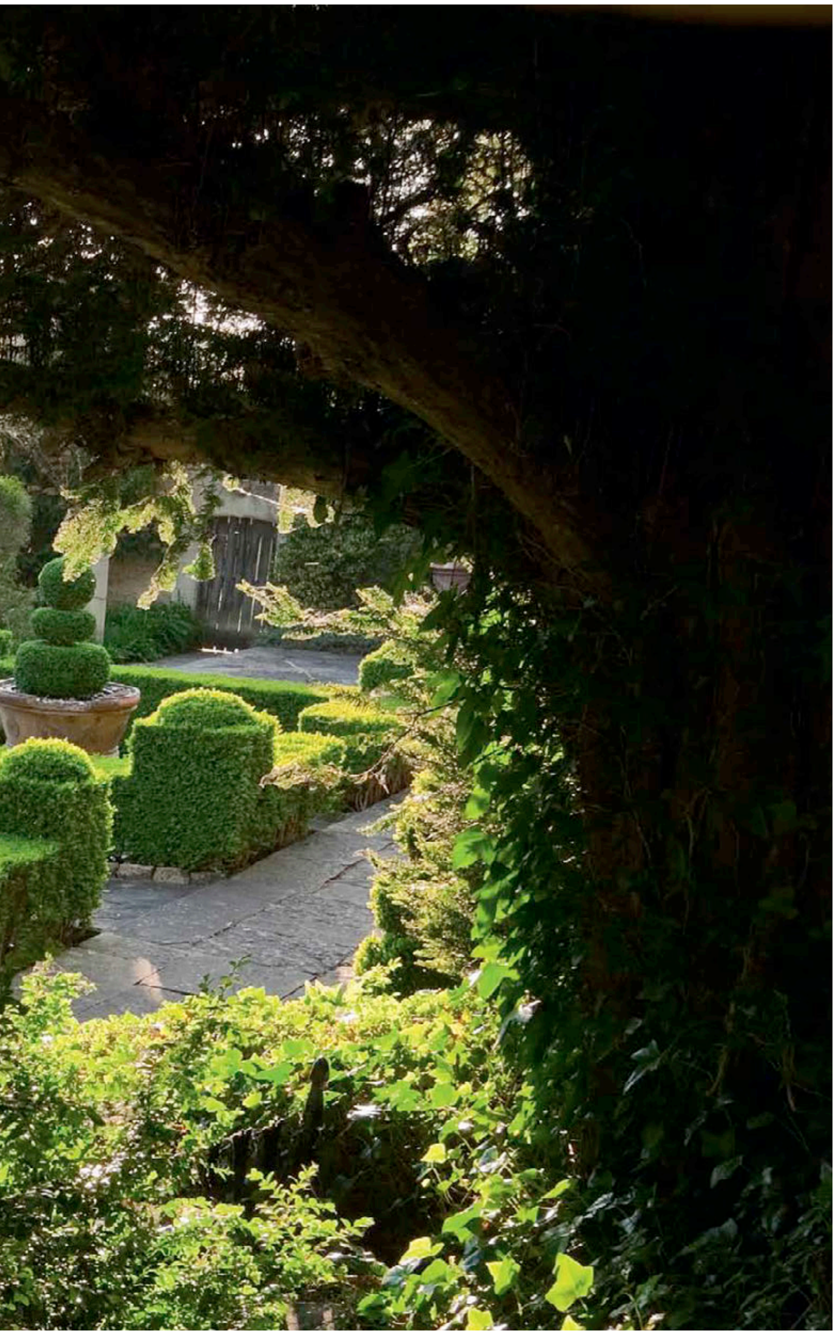
Peto's original garden in front of the Casita has been replaced by a graphic modern planting of box topiary and standard wisterias.



Iford Manor perches on the riverbank at the foot of a steep, wooded hillside, concealing traces of a much older house behind.



A stairway links the hanging woodland at the top of the hill to the Great Terrace below, with its framed views over the valley.



Peto included Japanese elements in many gardens, and this Japanese garden has been recreated recently behind the Casita.

Fastidious garden designer Harold Peto had spent a decade searching for his ideal of a country house before, in 1899, he chanced on Iford Manor, a honey-coloured Palladian-fronted gem set in a deep wooded valley, reached by a fairytale medieval bridge across the river Frome. The development of the garden on the steep slope behind the house, which continued till 1917, was recorded at intervals by his friend Avray Tipping (editor of *Country Life*), charting the evolution of an Italianate garden that was to become, in the fashionable Tennysonian phrase, 'a haunt of ancient peace'.

Italianate gardens had become popular in Britain towards the close of the 19th century, and designers like Reginald Blomfield and Charles Barry unrolled balustrades and porticoes, terraces and fountains across Britain's wealthiest acres with all the subtlety of an advancing Roman army.

What Peto did was different. With his deep love of Italy and his collector's eye for the art and architecture of the early Renaissance, he saw to the very wellspring of the Italian Renaissance garden. He seized on its patrician vocabulary of sweeping stairways and running water, carefully chosen statuary and gracious garden buildings, adapting skilfully to the gentler light and contours of the British countryside. But at Iford, Peto did more, intuiting the Renaissance understanding of the garden as a new Arcadia – a place that might be at once a piece of human theatre, elegant and playful, yet carry a whisper of the divine. It is not Italy: the garden is romantically, quintessentially, English. Yet at Iford today, hearing the sound of a flute threading through the trees, you would not be surprised to come upon the goat-footed god playing his pan pipes, or to see a wood-nymph flitting among the trees.

The music that drifts through the garden on summer evenings is the inspiration of Elizabeth Cartwright-Hignett, the present owner, who every year mounts a season of concerts and operas at Iford. Elizabeth arrived in the early 1960s, downsizing from the family pile at Aynhoe in the Midlands. The garden, though superficially tidy, was not in a good state. The borders were thick with ground elder, and Peto's elegant colonnades and terraces were sliding inexorably down the hill. She called in designer Lanning Roper to help. "I had never had to deal with a complex garden like this before, and didn't want to mess it up." ▷

"A narrow gate opens to a paved courtyard, where the loggia – Peto's first intervention at Iford – groans under the weight of an ancient wisteria"

▷ For the last 30 years, the garden has been very much the province of her husband, John Hignett, who has worked tirelessly to preserve the garden architecture as Peto left it. A narrow gate opens to a paved courtyard, where the loggia – Peto's first intervention at Iford – groans under the weight of an ancient wisteria. (It was here before Peto came, and he was careful it should not be damaged). From here a staircase sweeps up to the top of the garden, punctuated by a series of terraces leading off to the right. At the top is the Great Terrace, lined with columns like the nave of a cathedral. At one end stands a small octagonal summer house; at the other, a semi-circular seat forms the apse of Peto's 'outdoor basilica'. A colonnade frames views of the valley below, while the hanging woods above create a quiet backdrop for a parade of artefacts collected on his European travels – vehicles, Peto believed, for stirring the poetic memory and creating a sense of connection with the past.

There are fewer of these than there were. Some have deteriorated, and in this day and age, sighs Elizabeth, "you can't leave anything in the garden that isn't securely nailed down." Yet the garden is still liberally peppered with urns and sarcophagi, bronzes and marbles, while precious fragments of stonework are incorporated into the garden's two principal buildings, the Casita and the Cloister.

The Casita, formerly a toolshed, was built from stone recycled from Iford's pigsties, decorated with 12th-century marble columns from Verona. The Cloister, begun in 1914, was built expressly to house more of Peto's 'antique fragments'. The sturdy outer walls give no clue to the delicacy within: slender twin columns twined round with curls of clematis; a 14th-century wellhead at the centre, bearing the rope marks of centuries of use.

The planting, also, remains substantially Peto's – soaring cypress and spreading juniper, clipped box and *Phillyrea* (all propagated from Peto's original specimens), architectural acanthus and lavish tangles of wisteria.

"But it is really all guesswork, since there is no garden archive," explains Elizabeth, "and the *Boke of Iford*, Peto's own account of the garden, doesn't really mention the planting. So we have to be ▷

The Great Terrace was originally a grassy plat where, in the late 1700s, the Dean of Christchurch used to pace up and down composing his sermons. Peto extended it into his own Via Appia.

Essential features of the Italian garden

Formal geometry
The Renaissance gardens of Italy were the first to understand the garden in terms of geometry, applying mathematical rules of harmony and proportion to garden layout – the basis for all formal gardens to this day. A strong central axis leads from the house, intersected at right angles and dividing the garden into distinct spaces.

Hedges and topiary
These spaces are often delineated by evergreen hedges, while vistas and perspectives may be emphasised with repeated balls or pyramids of topiary. The Italian garden traditionally uses a very limited plant palette, principally evergreens such as box, bay, myrtle and yew, all very suitable for clipping.

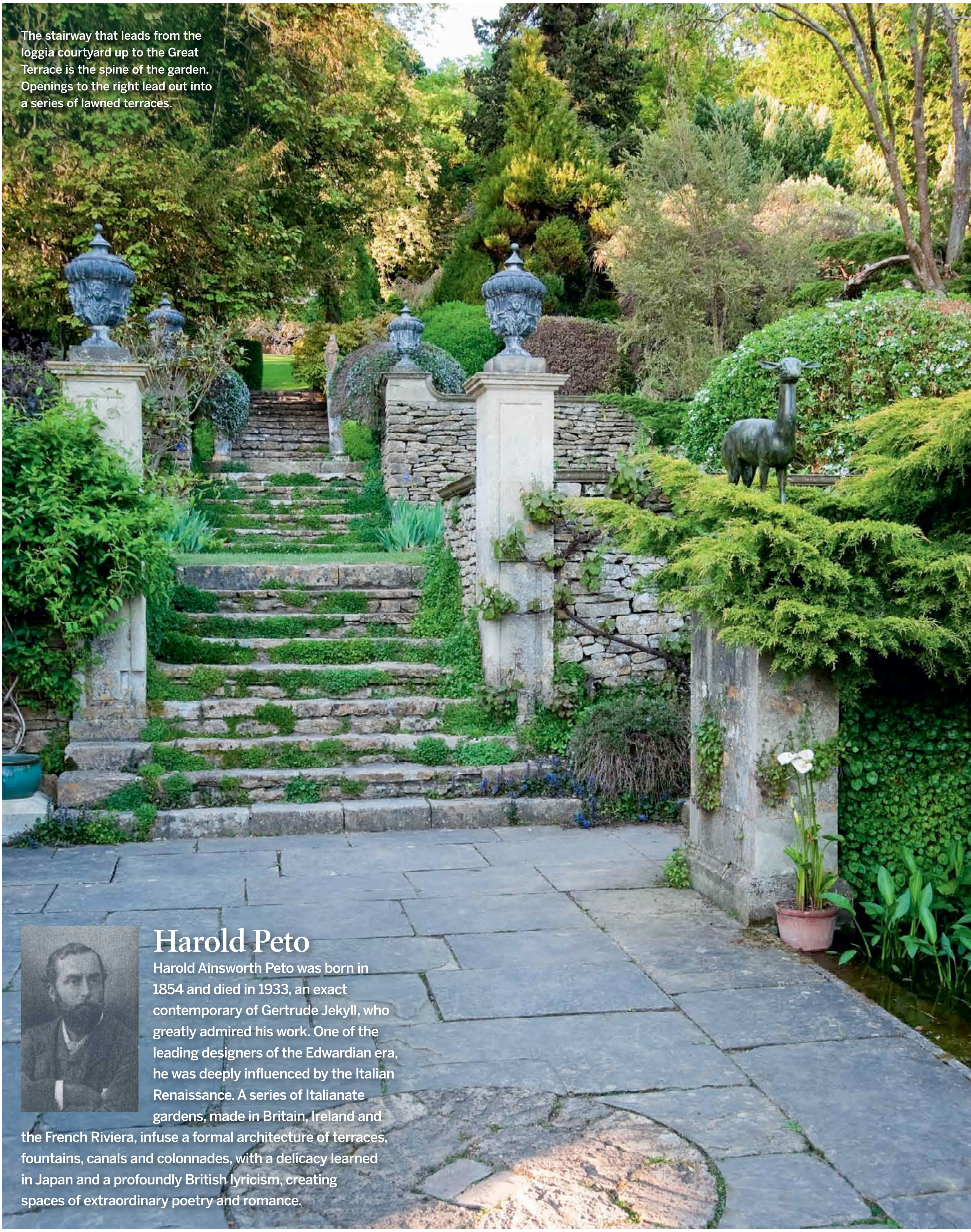
Changes of level
Iford exploits its hillside site to spectacular effect, with stacked terraces and sweeping stairways. But even a small step up or down will make a huge difference.

Pergolas, arches, arbours
All contribute shade, privacy, extra plant growing space, and an authentically Italian feel.

Decorative stonework
The harmonious pairing of clipped greenery and elegant stonework is the very essence of the Italian garden. Many gardens were conceived as outdoor sculpture galleries.

Water features
Some form of water is essential, whether as a fountain, a water curtain or a reflecting pool.

Plants in pots
A handful of handsome terracotta pots, strategically placed, offer the opportunity to introduce colour and scent to the garden.



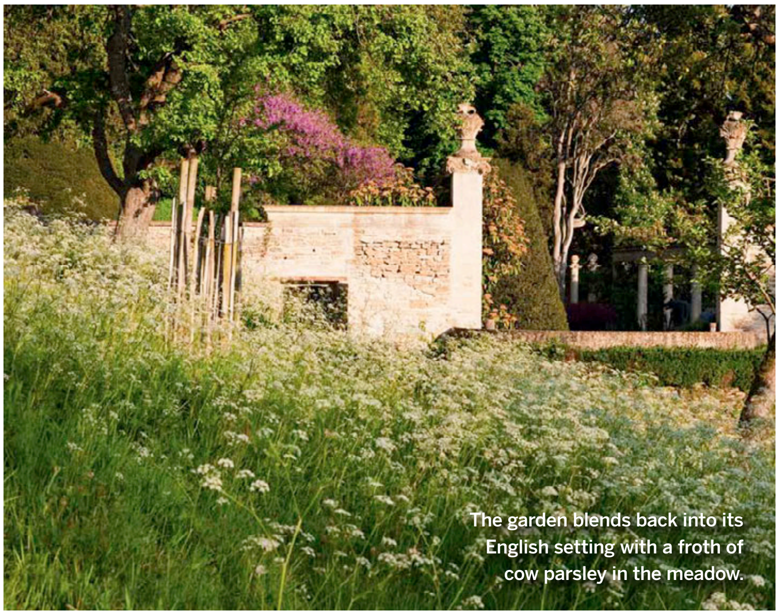
The stairway that leads from the loggia courtyard up to the Great Terrace is the spine of the garden. Openings to the right lead out into a series of lawned terraces.

Harold Peto

Harold Ainsworth Peto was born in 1854 and died in 1933, an exact contemporary of Gertrude Jekyll, who greatly admired his work. One of the leading designers of the Edwardian era, he was deeply influenced by the Italian Renaissance. A series of Italianate gardens, made in Britain, Ireland and the French Riviera, infuse a formal architecture of terraces, fountains, canals and colonnades, with a delicacy learned in Japan and a profoundly British lyricism, creating spaces of extraordinary poetry and romance.

Clematis montana var. *rubens* twines round the marble columns of the Cloisters, worked in France to an Italian Romanesque design.

> *"Old buildings or fragments of masonry carry one's mind back to the past in a way that a garden of flowers only cannot do. Gardens that are too stony are equally unsatisfactory; it is the combination of the two in just proportion which is the most satisfactory."* HAROLD PETO



The garden blends back into its English setting with a froth of cow parsley in the meadow.

▷ guided by old photographs, and the plant labels we dig up from time to time. Of course, these might not necessarily be plants he stuck with. He might have put something in one year and it died on him, or he looked at it, and thought, that's got to go!

"We like to think that if he came back today, he would recognise the garden as his own, if not in every detail, at least in the spirit of what he was trying to achieve here."

As the sun goes down, happy chattering groups spread their picnics under the trees. And later, as a flautist stands in the doorway of the cloister, silken skeins of sound float to rapt faces and out, like an enchantment, into the night.

Thrilling theatre. Utterly Arcadian. Pure Peto. □

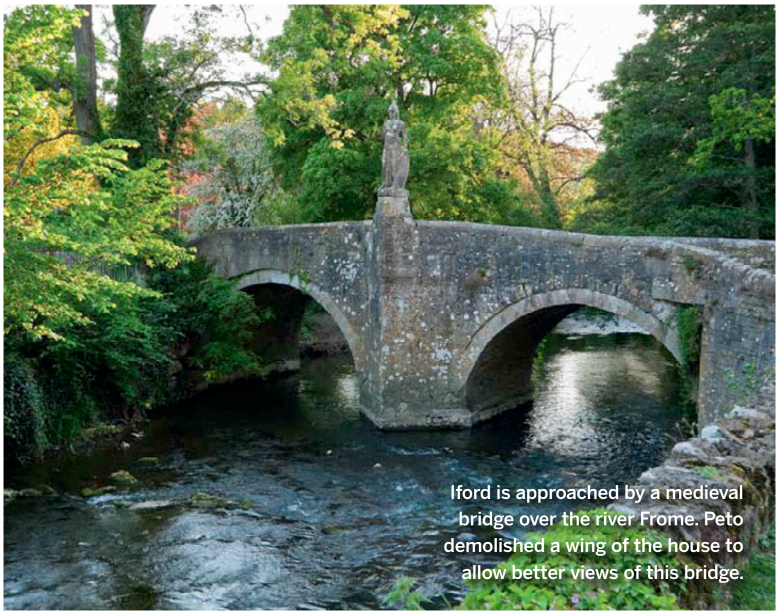
USEFUL INFORMATION

ADDRESS Iford Manor, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 2BA

TEL 01225 863146, WEBSITE www.ifordmanor.co.uk

OPEN Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday & Sunday (& Bank Holiday Mondays), 2-5pm, April to September; Sunday, 2-5pm during October.

CONCERT BOOKINGS www.ifordarts.co.uk



Iford is approached by a medieval bridge over the river Frome. Peto demolished a wing of the house to allow better views of this bridge.

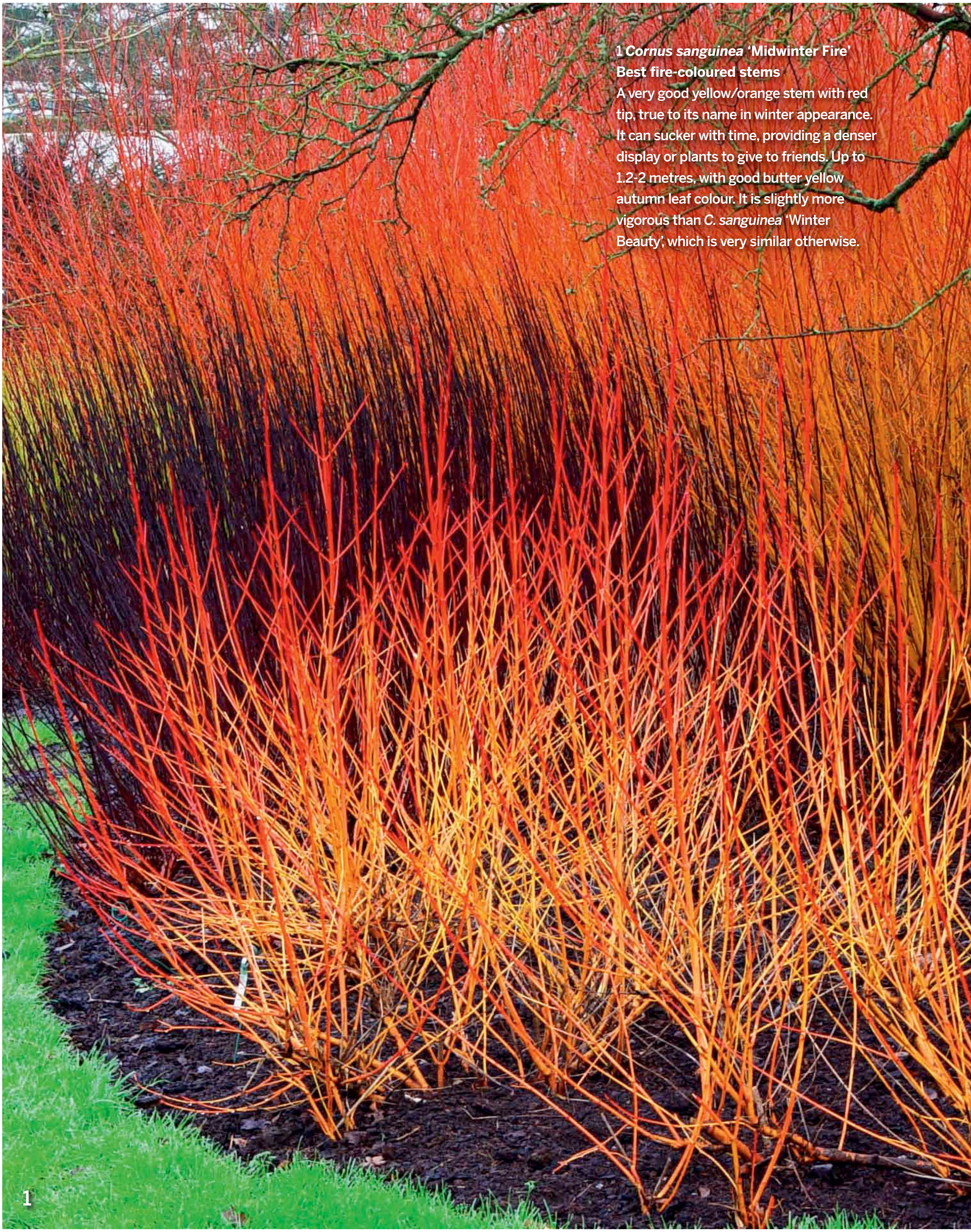
MORE PETO GARDENS

Buscot Park, Oxfordshire
Peto's magisterial water garden, considered his masterwork.
WEBSITE www.buscot-park.com

Ilnacullin, County Cork
Dreamiest of gardens, on an island in Bantry Bay.
WEBSITE www.garnishisland.com

Wayford Manor, Somerset
An intimate family garden in Somerset, which Peto designed for his sister.
WEBSITE www.ngs.org.uk

DESIGN PICS INC. - RM CONTENT / ALAMY. OXSHOT / ALAMY



1 ***Cornus sanguinea*** **'Midwinter Fire'**
Best fire-coloured stems
A very good yellow/orange stem with red tip, true to its name in winter appearance. It can sucker with time, providing a denser display or plants to give to friends. Up to 1.2-2 metres, with good butter yellow autumn leaf colour. It is slightly more vigorous than *C. sanguinea* 'Winter Beauty', which is very similar otherwise.

Cornus stem colour

Offering a blaze of colour even in darkest winter, cornus stems are a valuable addition to any garden palette

WORDS **WOLFGANG BOPP** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREA JONES**

Wolfgang Bopp trained in Germany and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He has worked at the World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the National Botanic Gardens. He is now Curator at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens.

Winter makes us hungry for some bright colours in the garden. A must for any winter garden display is the genus *Cornus*, with an unrivalled range of stem colours. The *Cornus alba* group, (containing *C. alba*, *C. stolonifera*, *C. amomum* and *C. sanguinea* among others) form deciduous multi-stemmed shrubs up to 4 metres tall, often spreading by suckering or 'natural' layering. While the most common summer leaf colour is green, there are some good yellow-leaved cultivars such as *C. alba* 'Aurea' and *C. sericea* Kelsey's Gold (='Rosco'), as well as striking variegated selections such as *C. alba* 'Elegantissima' and *C. alba* Ivory Halo (= 'Bailhalo'), providing a real show piece in any garden, particularly in a north facing or semi-shady spot. Autumn leaf colour ranges from bright butter yellows in *C. sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire' and *C. s.* 'Anny's Winter Orange' to a deep pink in *C. alba* 'Sibirica' to red purple tones in *C. alba* 'Kesselringii'. It is the winter stem colour, however, that is the real star of the show.

Dogwoods are largely very forgiving garden plants; cold-hardy, they accept a range of soils and sun. Variegated and yellow leaf forms prefer some midday dappled shade. When establishing, water well and mulch like any other shrub. Once established they don't need much special attention other than pruning, mulching and feeding.

Cornus make good feature shrubs and also work well in mixed borders. Most gardens, big or small, have a border with a shrubby background and herbaceous plantings at the front. Dogwoods are perfect for such situations, providing a leafy foil all summer, when the herbaceous plants provide interest. Come winter, when the front of the border has died down, the green, yellow, orange and red stems of the cornus look like fireworks. If there's space, groups of three or five will strengthen the effect. For the very small garden or in big planters, less vigorous plants such as *C. s.* 'Midwinter Fire' are more suitable.

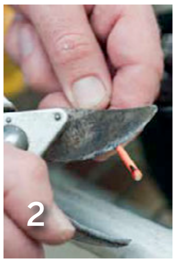
Plant associations are important. Bulbs, heather, low evergreen grasses, carex, hellebores, bergenia are all superb companions. Bamboos such as the yellow *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* f. *spectabilis* is perfect with the deep purple of *C. alba* 'Kesselringii' or carmine red of *C. alba* 'Sibirica'. The white stems of *Rubus biflorus*, evergreen foliage of hollies and winter flowering shrubs are great additions.

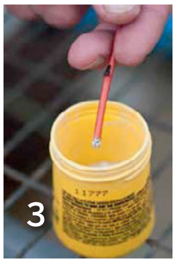
For the most powerful winter stem effect, regular hard pruning (coppicing or pollarding) is key. Strong growing selections can be coppiced annually, but feed them regularly and ensure the plants are not stressed through the season by mulching and reducing competition. For less vigorous cultivars, pruning every two or three years is the better option. A good regime can be to remove half or one third of the oldest stems each winter. This provides a shrubby framework all year with bright young growth. If your garden suffers from deer browsing, using this method helps to reduce damage. ☐

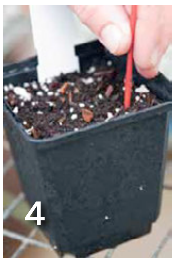
• Turn over for Wolfgang's recommended *Cornus* cultivars ▷

Increase your cornus collection

You can propagate cornus in a number of ways: **Tip layering** is the simplest method. Choose a young shoot that can be bent to the ground, wound part of the young stem, pin to the ground in a shallow trench filled with compost and allow it to root over the subsequent 12 months.







Hardwood cuttings (pictured) are taken in late autumn using the current year's growth. **1** Cut stems 15 to 20cm long. **2** Wound the lowest 30 to 50mm of the cutting with a sharp knife to improve rooting. **3** Dip the end/ wounded part of the cutting into rooting hormone, before inserting ¾ of the length of the cutting into propagation compost or free draining soil. **4** Keep in a cool greenhouse, cold frame or outside. Keep them cool, out of strong sunlight. Plants are ready to plant out or pot on the following autumn.

Growing from seed requires winter cold to germinate. Sow in autumn, place trays outside, cover with chicken wire. Or place in the fridge, just above freezing for three months before putting the trays outside in a cold frame or greenhouse. A seed-raised plant may not be identical to the parent.

Softwood cuttings can be taken in early summer. Dip in rooting hormone and keep in a mist unit, mini-propagator or cover with clear polythene. Keep in light but out of direct sun at room temperature.

1 PLANTOGRAPHY / ALAMY

2 ***Cornus sericea* ‘Bud’s Yellow’**
A good lime-green stem colour, it is a strong grower, reaching 2m. Best if partnered with a dark stem or dark evergreen background. Rarely suckers.

3 ***Cornus sericea* ‘Flaviramea’**
Best yellow stem
Deep green glossy foliage growing to 1.5-2m tall with yellow-olive winter stems. Excellent contrast to dark stems such as *C. alba* ‘Kesselringii’.

4 ***Cornus alba* Red Gnome (= ‘Regnzam’)**
A more compact plant, growing to 1.2-2m. It forms a beautiful round shrub. Foliage is smaller, turning red in autumn colour. The fine textured branches are red in winter.

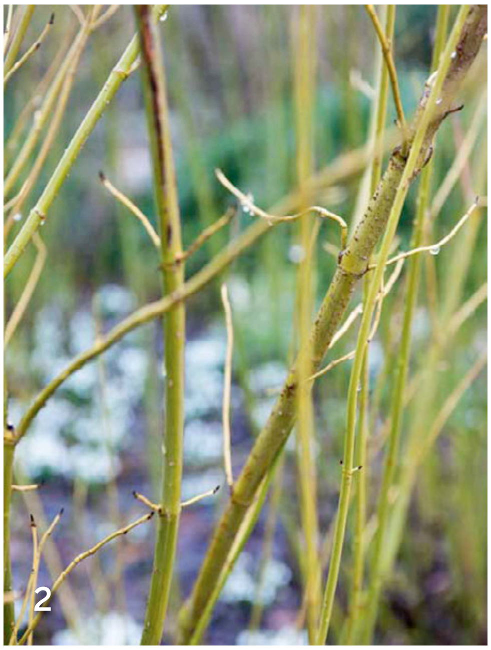
5 ***Cornus alba* ‘Elegantissima’**
Best variegated leaf form
The white variegated leaves make this a stunning feature plant to brighten up a darker corner. Winter stem is deep red, it will grow 2-3m tall and suffers little scorching.

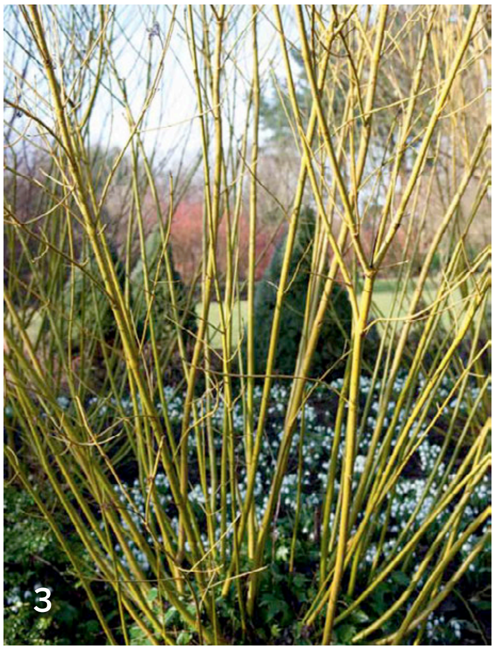
6 ***Cornus amomum* ‘Blue Cloud’**
A strong growing plant, reaching over 3-4 metres when mature. Has shiny steely-blue fruit in late summer, yellow-orange tinged autumn foliage. Winter stem red-brown. Named by Sir Harold Hillier in the 1980s.

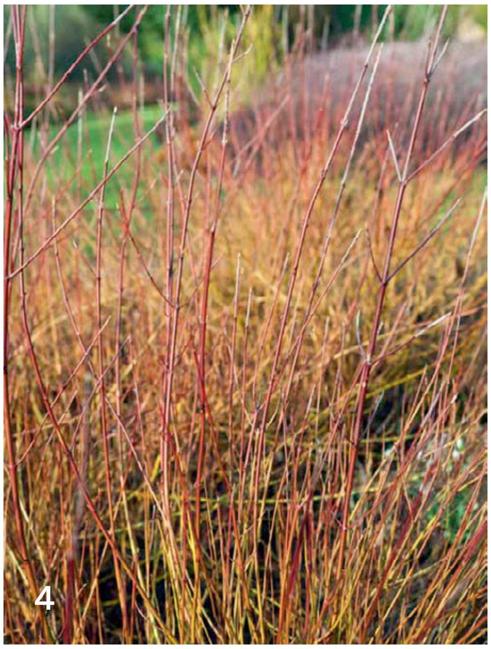
7 ***Cornus sericea* ‘White Gold’**
A yellow-green stem. Leaf edge creamy white, grading to a green centre. Excellent to brighten up a shady corner, does not scorch; colours even in shade.

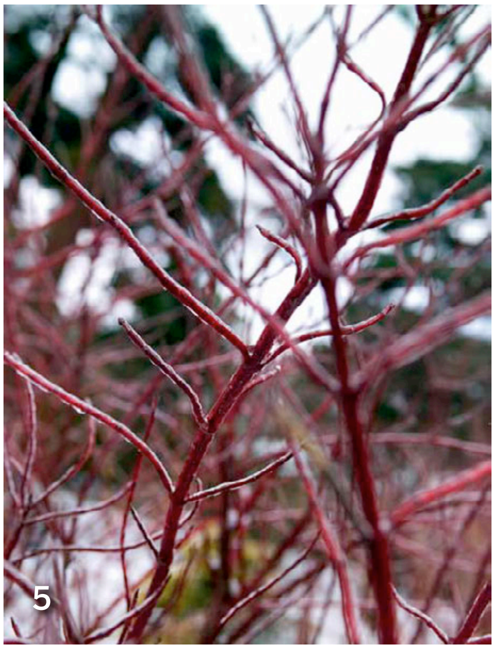
8 ***Cornus sanguinea* ‘Compressa’**
For the connoisseur
A plant of most unusual habit, with stiff upright branches and small leaves (3cm x 4cm). It slowly grows into a narrow funnel-shaped shrub, 3m tall after 25 years. Stem colour green to orange brown, fading to grey brown. To obtain its natural shape, it should be left unpruned.

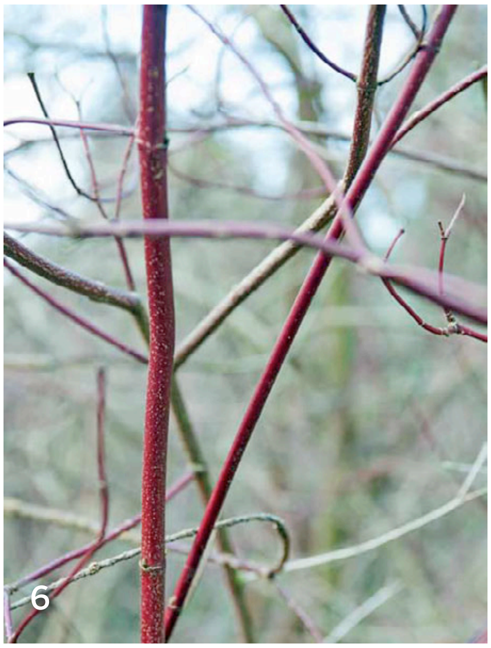
9 ***Cornus sericea* ‘Kelseyi’**
Best small selection
A dwarf selection to 50cm tall, slowly spreading to make a low mound.

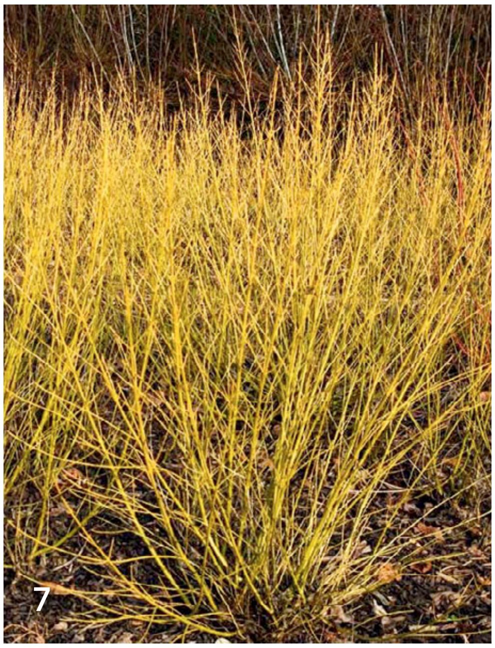












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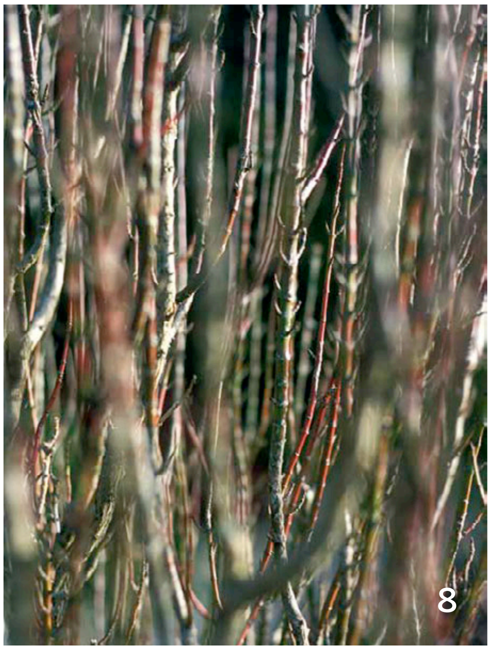
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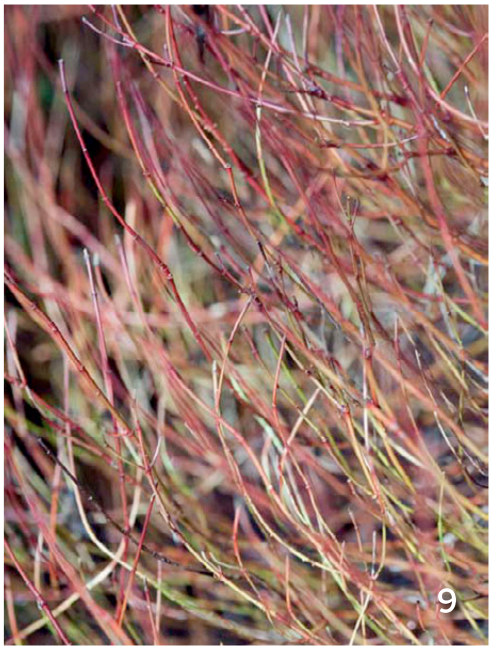
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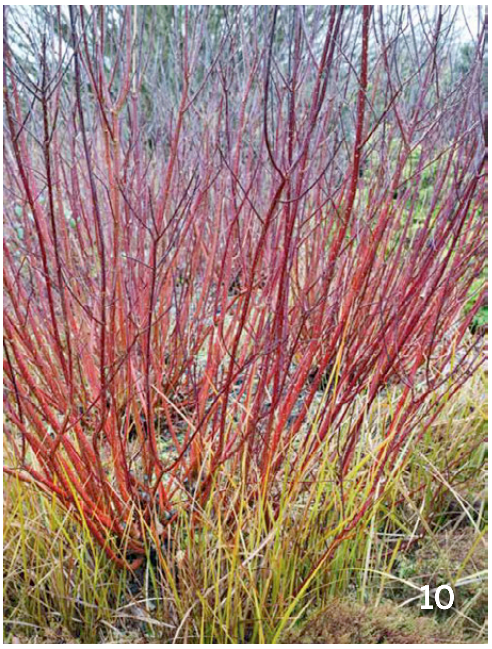
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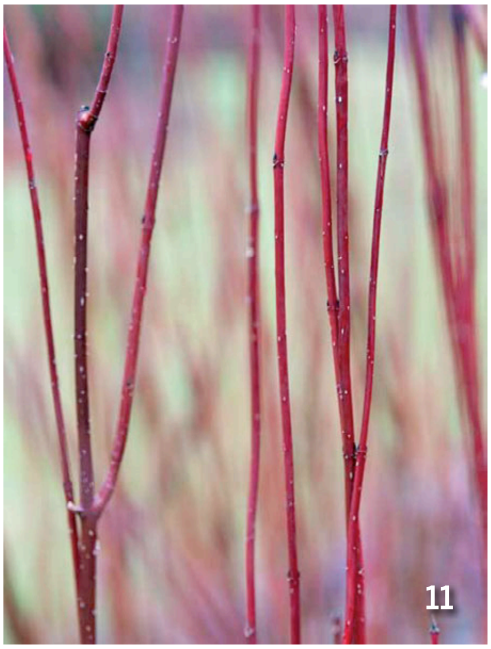
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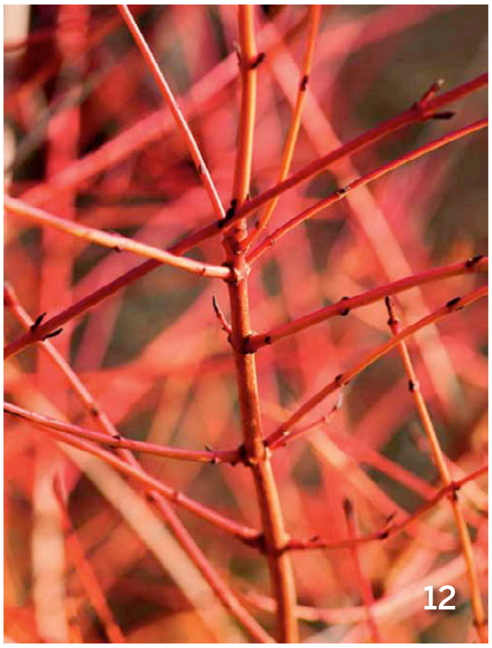
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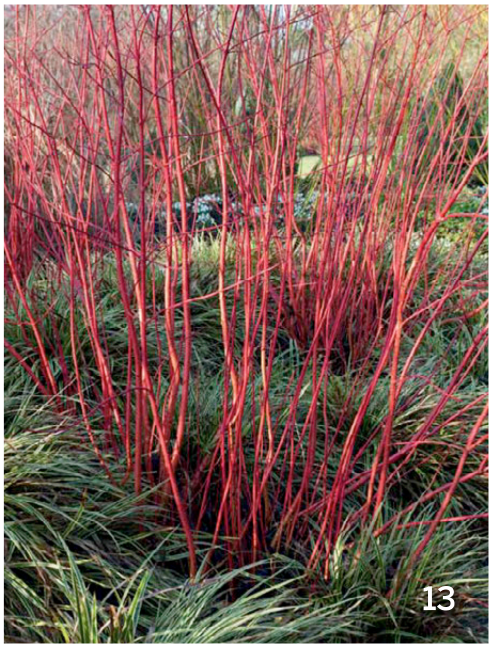
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8 SARAH CUTTLE / GAP PHOTOS, 10 CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS / GAP PHOTOS

Green, yellow orange winter stem, yellow autumn colour. Ensure fallen leaves are cleaned off the branches for winter. Prune every 3-5 years for strong stem colour.

10 ***Cornus alba* 'Kesselringii'**
Best deep purple
Has the darkest stem and a more upright habit. Stem is green-purple in summer, pink-purple in autumn and turns a deep brown-purple in winter. Less vigorous, but it can reach 2m in time. Try it around a white-stemmed birch, yellow or white daffodils.

11 ***Cornus alba* Ivory Halo (= 'Bailhalo')**
A compact shrub to 1.8m, deep green foliage thinly edged in creamy white. Winter stems are red/ brown. Lightens a shaded area in summer.

12 ***Cornus sanguinea***
'Anny's Winter Orange'
A vibrant bright orange winter stem, with tips in stronger red. Less vigorous than *C.* 'Midwinter Fire', it has a broad habit with autumn leaf colour in yellow with shades of pale pink.

13 ***Cornus alba* 'Sibirica'**
Best red stem
Though widely planted in public spaces, this really is one of the very best red-stemmed dogwoods, forming a medium size shrub 1.5-3m. Excellent when underplanted with snowdrops, white crocus, low grasses.

USEFUL INFO
BOOK *Dogwood* by Paul Cappiello and Don Shadow. Timber Press, 2005.
NATIONAL COLLECTIONS OF CORNUS (with winter stems):
- Newby Hall Gardens, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5AE. Tel 0845 450 4068, www.newbyhall.co.uk;
- RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH. Tel 0845 265 8072, www.rhs.org.uk
- Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Jermyns Lane, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 OQA. Tel 01794 369317, www3.hants.gov.uk/hilliergardens

SUPPLIERS
RHS PLANT FINDER lists nurseries by plant selection.

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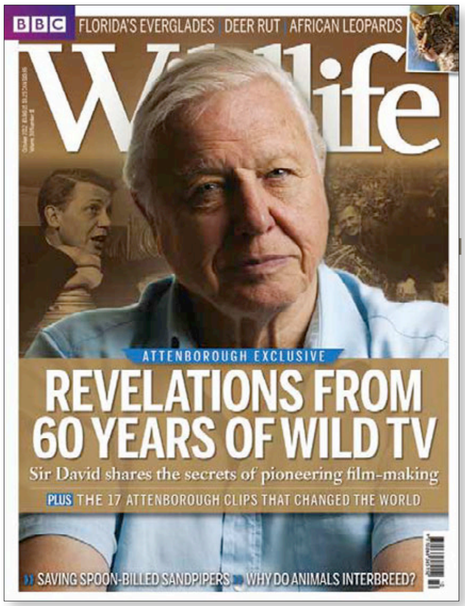
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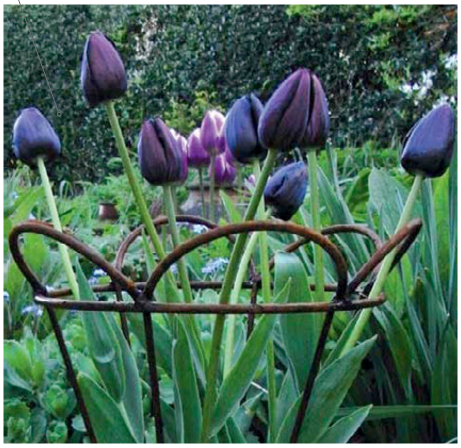
TEL **01773 550495**



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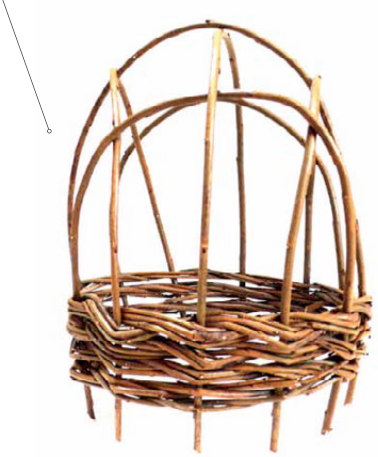
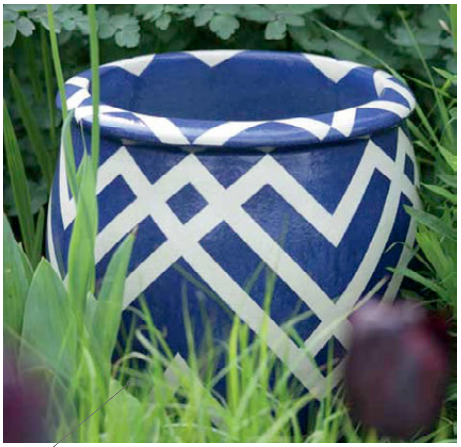
WEBSITE **www.ancientindustries.co.uk**
EMAIL **youngandancient@gmail.com**





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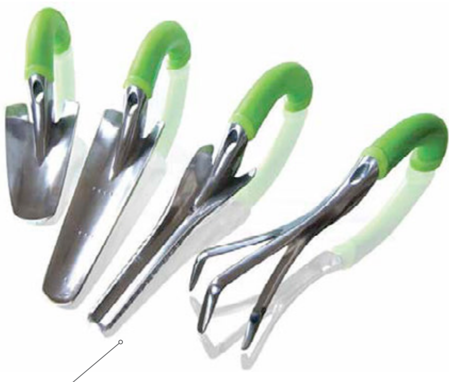

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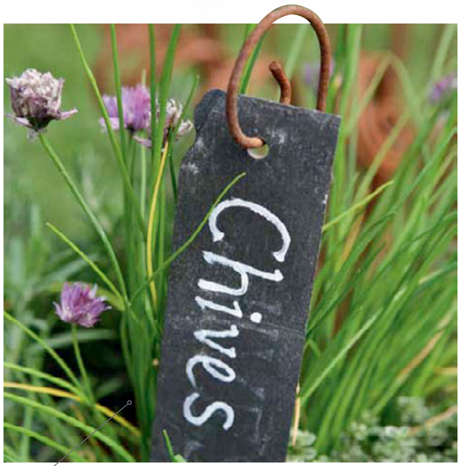

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Gifts for Gardeners…

Choose from this selection of inspiring gifts to delight your green-fingered friends this Christmas

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This practical and useful little tuck and tool box at £22 is just one of many fabulous home and garden gift ideas available from the Cotswolds-based Burford Garden Company – one of the country's favourite home and garden companies.

WEBSITE **www.burford.co.uk**
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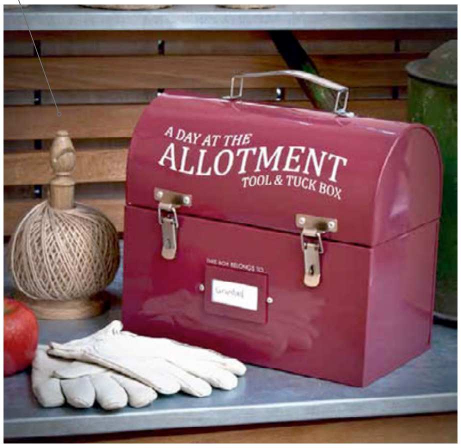

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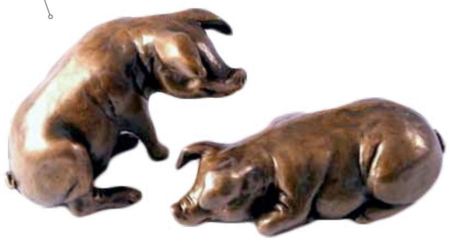
Bronze and affordable bronze resin animals make great frostproof gifts for the garden, such as these splendid bronze resin pigs at £30 plus p&p. Chilstone have a full range of beautiful animals such as hares, mice and tortoises from £24.95. Visit Chilstone at Victoria Park, Langton Green TN3 0RD.

WEBSITE **www.chilstone.com**
TEL **01892 740866**



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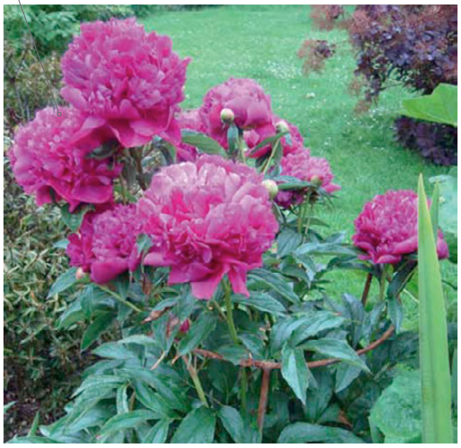
TEL **01584 781578**



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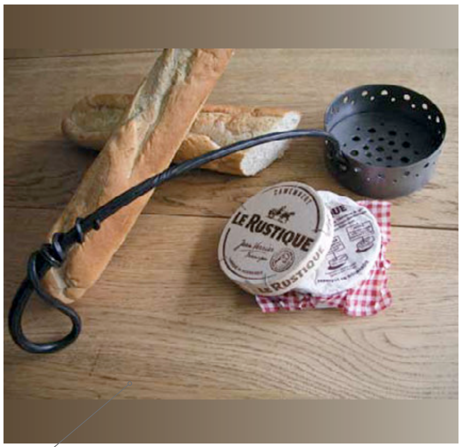

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WEBSITE **www.english-heritage.org.uk**
TEL **0870 333 1187**

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WEBSITE **www.Perilla.co.uk**
TEL **01886 853615**

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WEBSITE **www.josephbentley.co.uk**
TEL **01905 791984**

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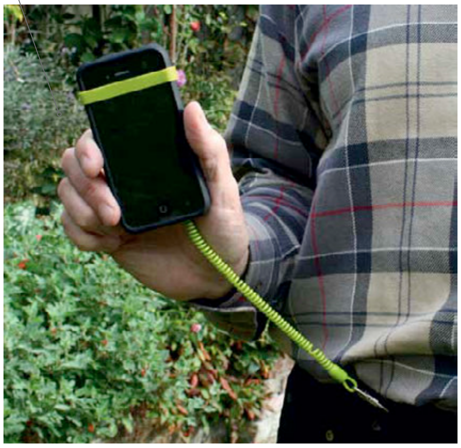

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News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI

RESTORATION

Bowles glasshouse

The recent restoration of the kitchen gardens at Myddelton House in Enfield, north London, the former home of the great plantsman EA Bowles, led to the discovery of the foundations of the original glasshouses. These have now been recreated in aluminium by Alitex and replicate original features such as the sunken water feature and a vine house with brick arches to allow the roots to grow outside. Entry is free but guided tours of the garden (£2.50-£5) can be booked. www.visitleevalley.org.uk

DESIGN

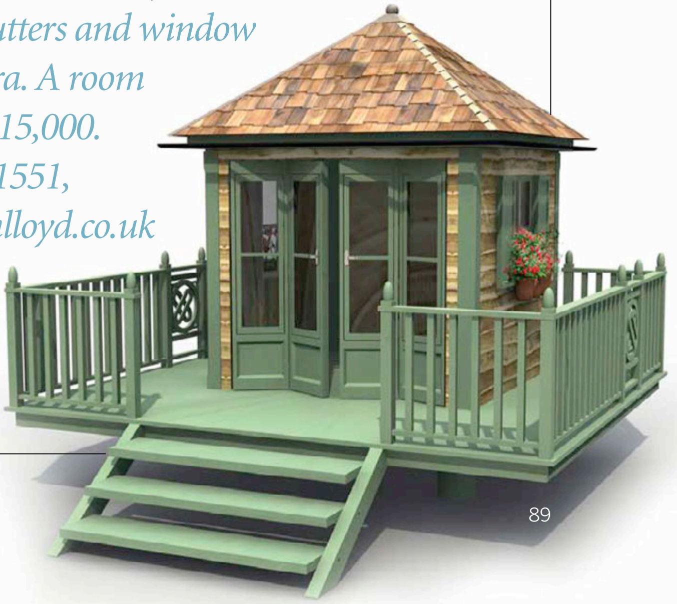
Award winners

Designers Tom Hoblyn and Janine Pattison have won Design Excellence Awards in the 2012 BALI National Landscape Awards, both for projects costing over £50,000. Tom's vision for a sloping landscape at a farmhouse in Suffolk incorporates an informal lake that surrounds the house on two sides leading to a series of formal terraces planted in an increasingly naturalistic style. Janine's design for a garden attached to a glass and render house on the Dorset coast features a sedum-roofed room and mosaic spa pool (pictured). www.thomashoblyn.com; www.janinepattison.com

ALLAN POLLOK-MORRIS

MEADOW RETREAT

The shingle-roofed timber 'Meadow Retreat' is designed to sit above the ground on a wooden deck. It is made of treated softwood and painted in Farrow & Ball Breakfast Room Green. It measures 3.6m x 3.6m and costs £9,500. Glazing, lighting, a fold-out bed system, door and window furniture, shutters and window boxes are extra. A room in oak costs £15,000. Tel 07974 071551, www.williamlloyd.co.uk



GARDEN OPENING

Bedfordshire beauty

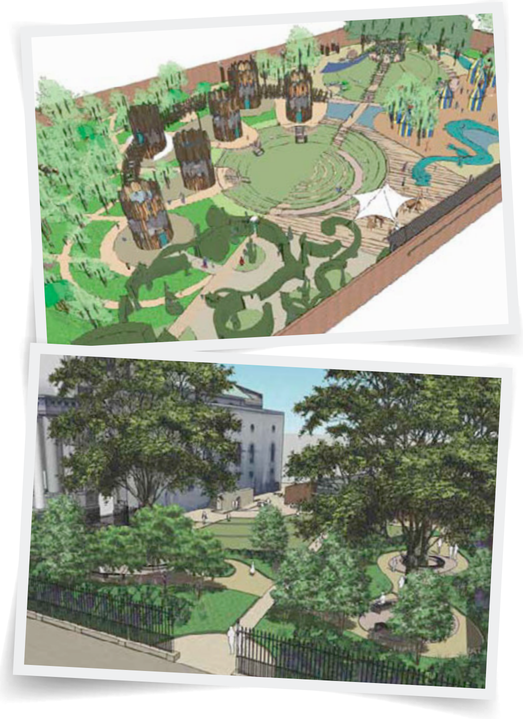
Winter is an excellent time to appreciate the intricate patterns in the newly restored French Parterre at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire. Completed this summer, when the box-edged beds were studded with pink and blue flowers as they had been in the early 1900s, the parterre is framed with Versailles planters with Portuguese laurels. Several pieces of the garden's historic statuary have been relocated in a new sculpture gallery in the former dairy building. The next stage in the 20-year restoration project is the American Garden. From 5 November to 18 February the gardens are only open at weekends. www.english-heritage.org.uk

Gallic influences define Wrest Park in Bedfordshire.

COMPETITIONS

Double winners

The landscape architecture practice Robert Myers Associates has recently won two major design competitions: the design of a new family garden at Hampton Court Palace and the redesign of the gardens at Christ Church, a Hawksmoor church in Spitalfields, London. The £1.5 million Magic Garden on the site of the former tennis courts at Hampton Court combines elements that link it to the myths, legends and history of the palace and includes climbable Tiltyard Towers, a mount with a giant slide, a Wild Wood and a sculptural dragon. The opening of the new garden is planned for spring 2015. The design for the enlarged public garden at Christ Church, Spitalfields, unifies the divided space, retains three mature plane trees and provides sculptural seating at their base. Mixed planting screens the garden from the main road while an arc of lawn creates an open space for gatherings and events.


Winning designs: proposed Magic Garden at Hampton Court (top), and new public garden in Spitalfields.

Notebook

- **Juliet Sargeant, who runs a garden design practice** in Sussex and is a course leader at the KLC School of Design, has been appointed Chair of the Society of Garden Designers and will preside at the society's inaugural annual Awards Ceremony in London on 9 November. She replaces Charles Rutherfoord.
- **The deadline for entries for the 14th International Garden Festival at Jardins de Métis** in Quebec, to be held from 21 June to 29 September 2013, is 9 November. www.projects.internationalgardenfestival.ca
- **Book now for the James Hearsum Lecture series** at Writtle College, Essex, which helps to fund travel bursaries for the college's design and horticultural students. For tickets telephone 01245 424231 or email Greg Allen, gta@writtle.ac.uk
- **Winter Open Days at Gaze Burvill's furniture workshop** in Hampshire take place on 16 November (11am-5pm) and 17 November (10am-4pm). Steam-bending techniques are explained and advice is offered on how to prepare and site your garden furniture in winter. www.gazeburvill.com
- **Booking is open for the University of Oxford's next ten-week online garden history course** which starts on 21 January 2013. English Landscape Gardens: 1650 to the Present Day is written by Tim Richardson and the course tutor is Dr Barbara Simms. www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses

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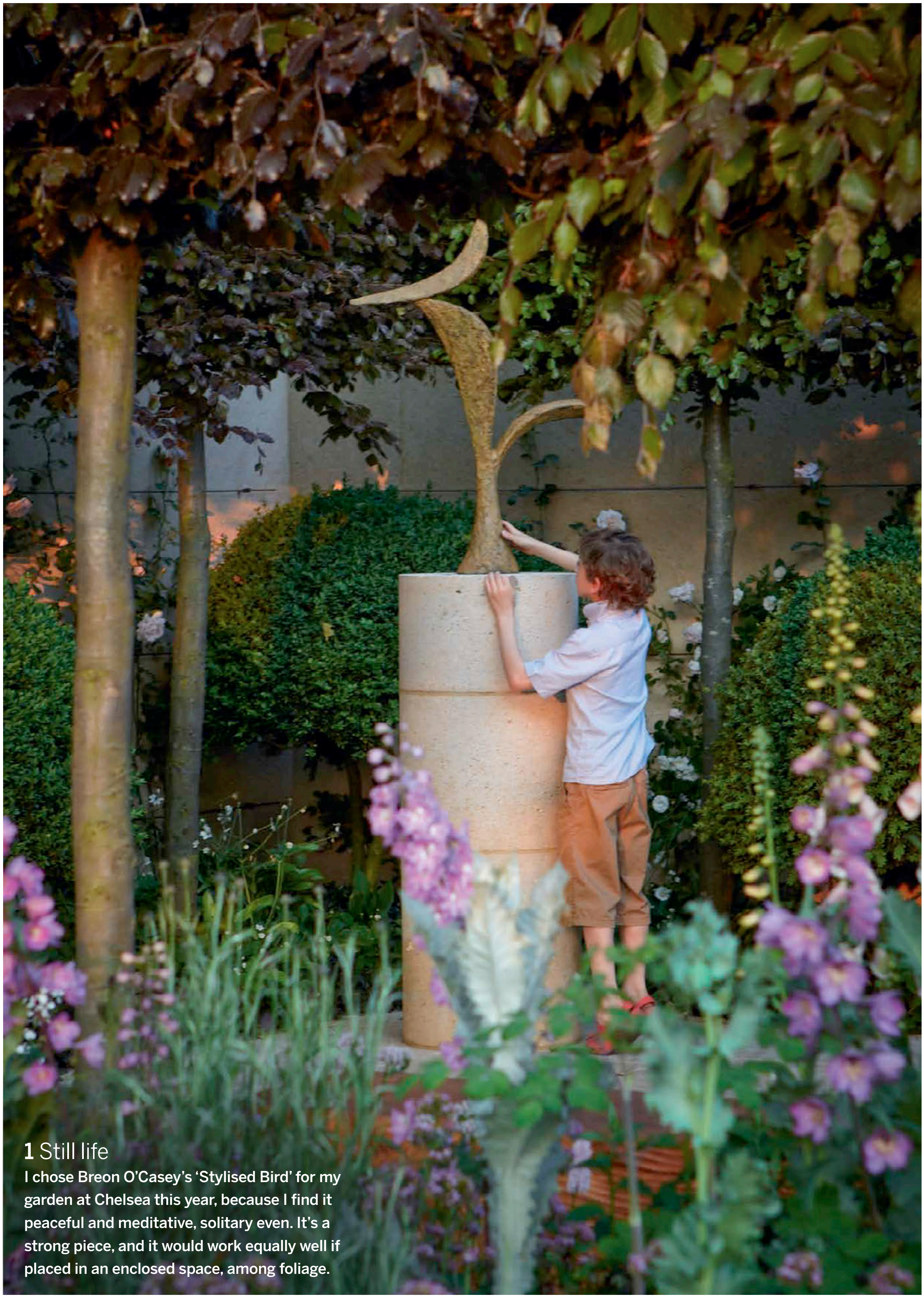


1 Still life

I chose Breon O'Casey's 'Stylised Bird' for my garden at Chelsea this year, because I find it peaceful and meditative, solitary even. It's a strong piece, and it would work equally well if placed in an enclosed space, among foliage.

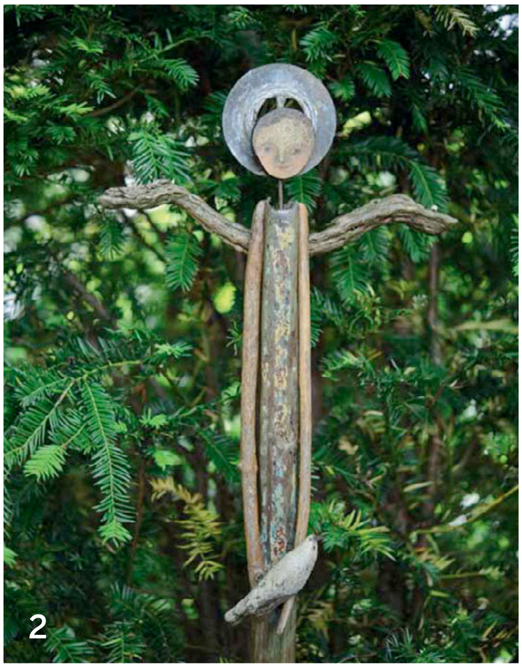
1 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

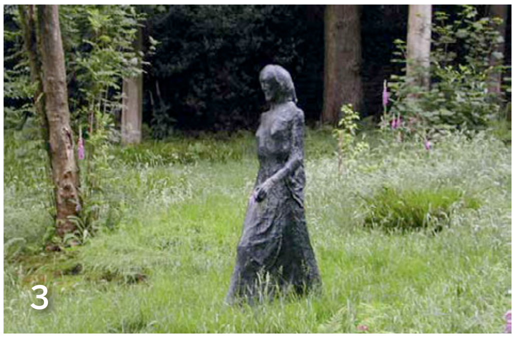
Arne Maynard is a leading garden designer based in London and Monmouthshire.

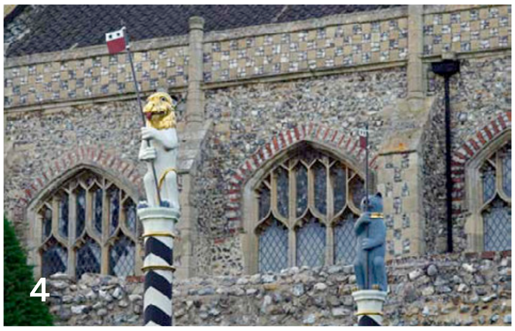
Sculpture

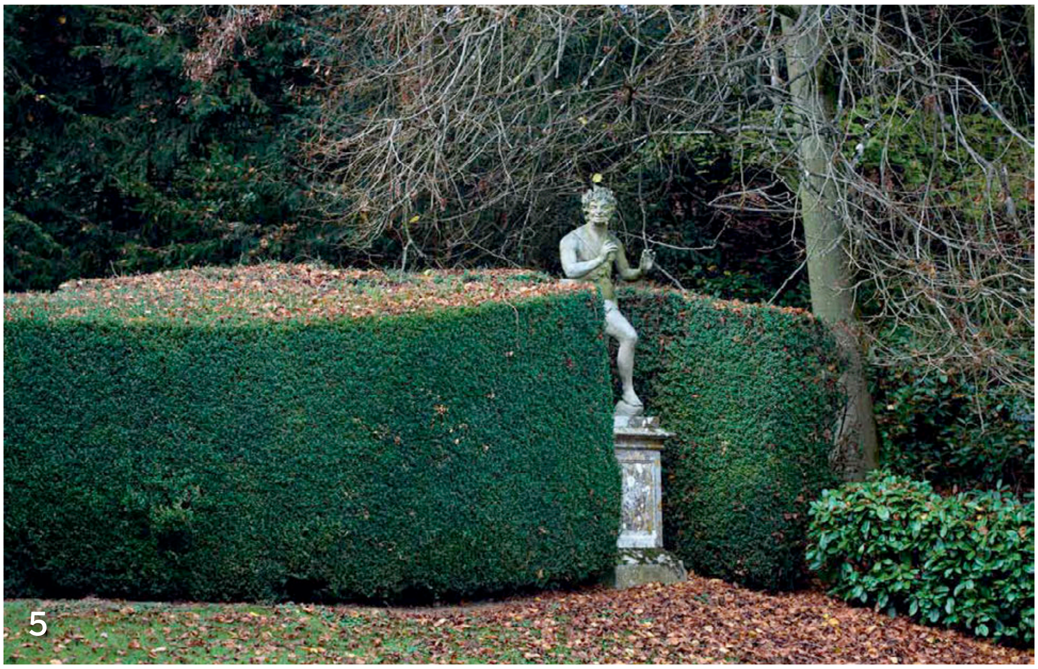
Garden sculptures come in many moods and forms, adding a human fingerprint to the art of nature.

WORDS ARNE MAYNARD









2 Passing Angel

'Angel' by Edwina Bridgeman stands by a path that leads to a village church. Made of found materials and painted, she's transient and will eventually vanish. But for now she makes people chuckle, a little reminder that you are being good, that you're going to church.

3 Light and dark

The bronze 'Walking Madonna' by Elisabeth Frink stands at the edge of a dark coniferous wood at Chatsworth. She is a sombre figure, but placing her in the light-filled meadow with orchids at her feet, is a wonderful piece of theatre.

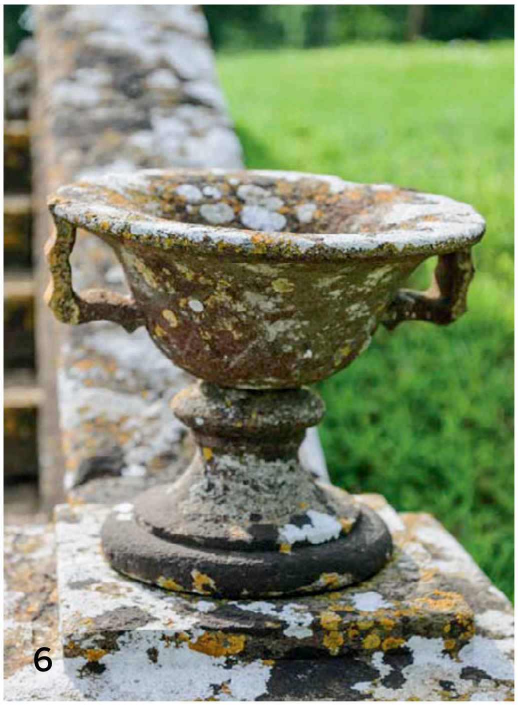
4 Heraldic beasts

Wooden heraldic beasts carved and painted by Mark Bridges along a walk at Elizabethan Stiffkey Old Hall. We wanted to bring alive the intricate and colourful craftsmanship that would have existed in the garden at this period.

5 Focal point

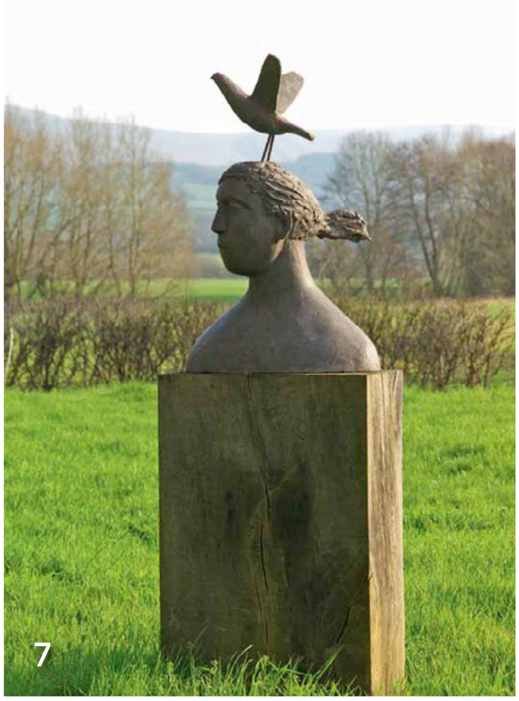
The white-painted, lead faun within a yew hedge at Rousham is less a sculpture, more an architectural element. It's placed to draw you on your journey around the landscape.

2 JASON INGRAM, 3 ARNE MAYNARD, 4 & 5 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER



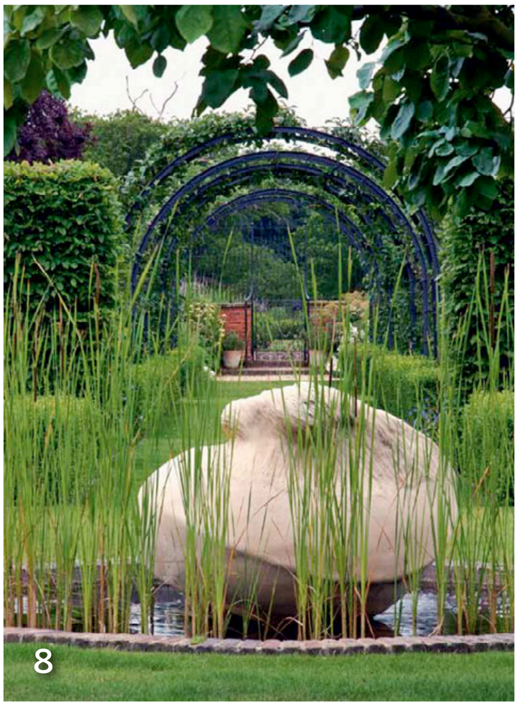
6 Semi-colon

A small stone vase stands at the base of the steps at Montacute, where it acts as a little punctuation mark, announcing a change. Slightly tilted, covered in lichens, it has a minor but characterful part.



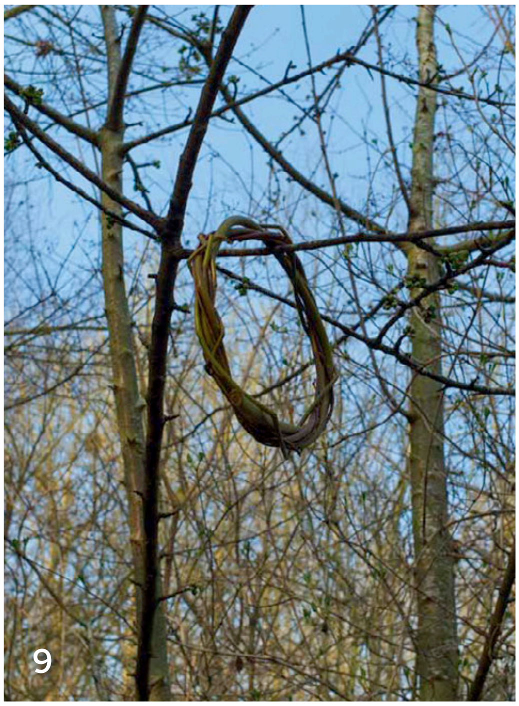
7 Flight path

In a friend's garden, a sculpture by Christopher Marvell is placed at the transitional point where it merges with the fields beyond. It adds a little humour, and is a lovely way of slowing the eye down before it travels off into the open countryside.



8 Water snail

A giant snail shell by Somerset-based ThomasonCudworth pours water into a dipping pool in an old kitchen garden. It is hand-sculpted in pale English terracotta, and in a part of the garden where the planting tends to be horizontal, it adds both height and humour.



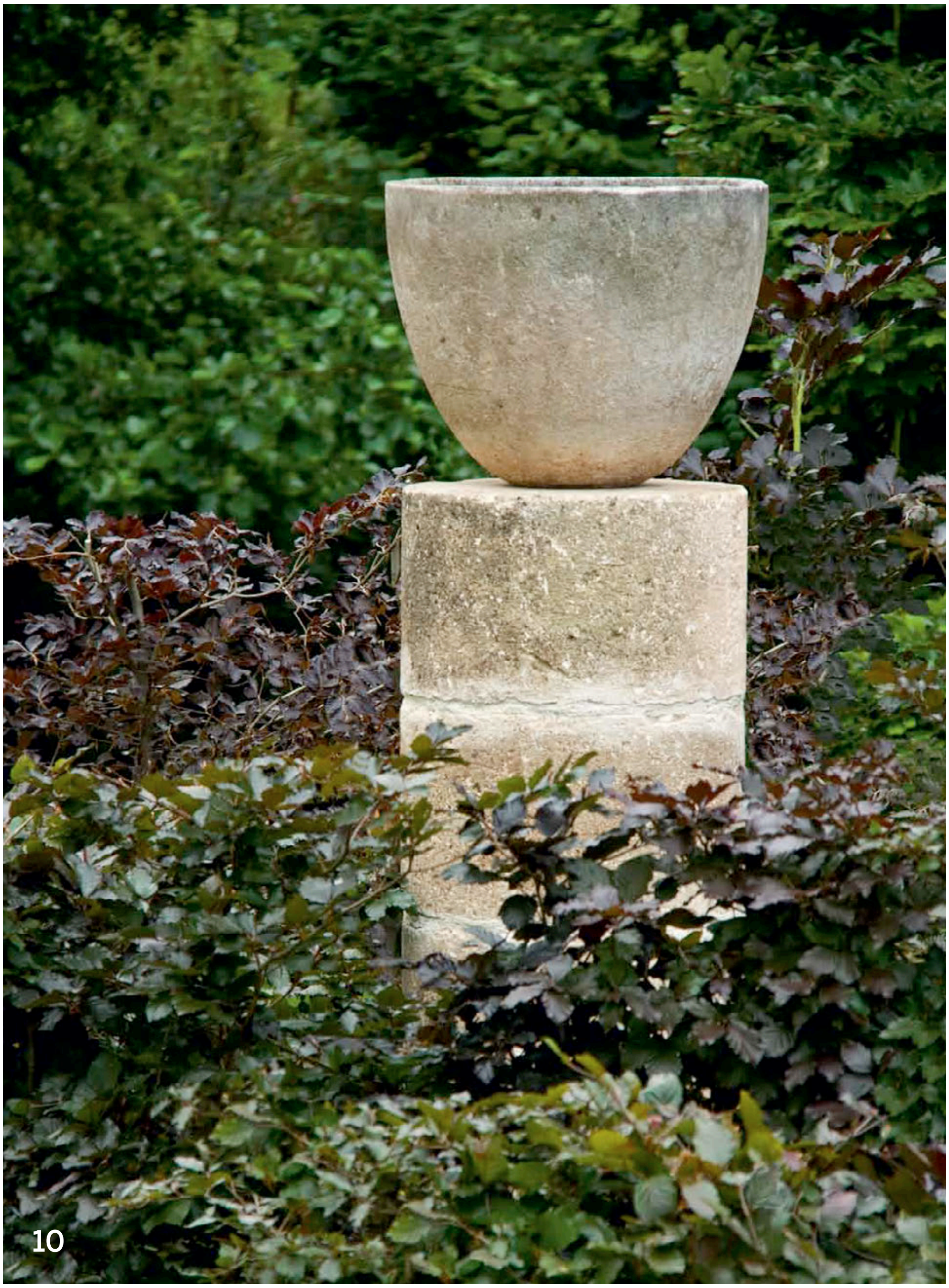
9 Hand made

A ring of pollard willow stems that I made and hung in a tree as I was wandering around a friend's garden. Proof that sculpture can be free, these little installations are human traces that show someone has been there, playful and unexpected.

6 JASON INGRAM, 7 WILLIAM COLLINSON, 8 ROWAN ISAAC, 9 WILLIAM COLLINSON

I think of sculpture as a reflection of the inner self, a biography of one's own tastes and moods, so the act of choosing a particular piece and placing it in the garden is a very personal one. It's not something I suggest to clients, because it's not a principle that when you make a garden you have to have sculpture in it. If the client wants it, then it will be their choice. Neither would I base a design on a piece of sculpture that's already in the garden, instead I'll make a design and let the sculpture find its own place within it. Similarly, if sculpture gets added later, it needs to find its own home. Sometimes a piece may wander around the garden for years until it finds the place that's right for it. And sometimes you have a brainwave about where to put it and it works immediately.

A single beautiful piece is usually more effective than having sculptures everywhere. Most modern gardens aren't like Renaissance or classical gardens where the sculptures are part of the garden's architectural narrative. Then there's the question of how you define sculpture? It can be figurative or abstract, man-made or found. I visited a garden recently where the owner had placed a shaped piece of flint on a plinth, just



10 BRITT WILLOUGHBY DYER

something she'd found in the garden, but the effect was quite magical.

Sculpture creates a focal point, or a destination in the garden. Why do we use it? I think we use it to create or evoke an emotion, and because it adds humanity to nature. Trees and plants create an atmosphere, but sculpture creates a reaction. It has the human fingerprint. The reaction might be that you admire the form and artistry of the piece, or it might be something quirky that makes you laugh. There is a distinction between sculpture that's used to evoke a mood or emotion, and sculpture used as a focal point. The faun at Rousham [picture 5], for instance, is there to draw you on and make an architectural statement. The urn on the wall [picture 6] is a little punctuation point; it is sculptural but doesn't evoke the same emotion as Elisabeth Frink's shadowy figure [picture 3] or the bronze bird [picture 1]. This abstract bird is an interpretation that's come from somebody's heart. It's quirky, it stimulates the mind, and you can see it was originally formed in clay. It has the sculptor's fingerprints still in it, like a biography of the imagination that formed it. □

NEXT MONTH Winter at Allt-y-bella

10 Centrepiece

This very simple urn sits at the centre of a copper-beech spiral in my garden. It's a beautiful, hand-carved piece and I chose it for the strength and plainness of its shape, but it is there as an architectural element, not to evoke an emotion.

Suppliers

Christopher Marvell
Christopher Marvell's website gives details of exhibitions around the country where you can see and buy his sculpture.
Tel 01223 880444, www.christophermarvell.com

Edwina Bridgeman
Based in Bath, Edwina Bridgeman makes work that is full of enchantment for both inside and out.
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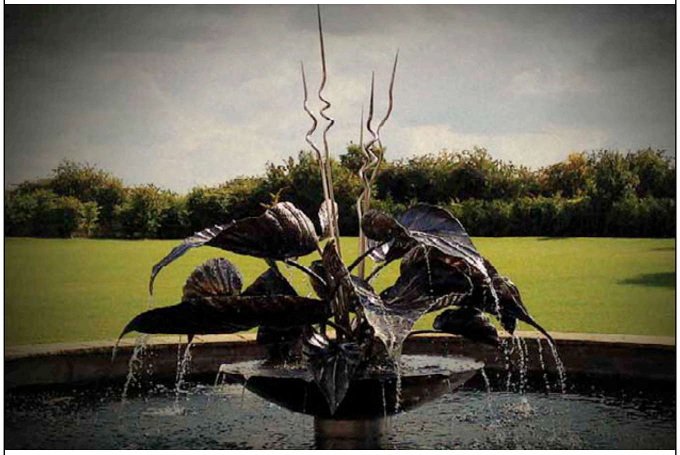

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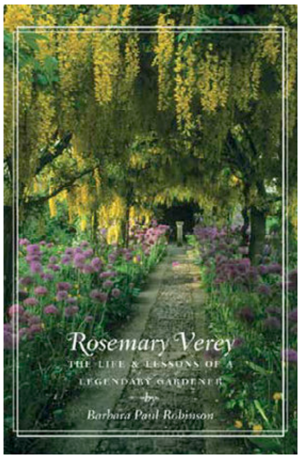
Book reviews, Crossword and Reader Offers

The Laburnum Walk at Barnsley House is a key feature of Rosemary Verey's Gloucestershire garden, discussed in a new book on the gardener's legacy, see overleaf.

JASON INGRAM / GAP PHOTOS

Book reviews



ROSEMARY VEREY: THE LIFE & LESSONS OF A LEGENDARY GARDENER

Barbara Paul Robinson

Godine, £24.95
ISBN 978-1567924503

The Winter Walk inside the 1770 garden wall, runs parallel to the Lime Allée and Laburnum Walk at Barnsley.

THE WINTER WALK BY ANDREW LAWSON

Barbara Paul Robinson is a New York lawyer who took a sabbatical from her Manhattan practice to learn gardening from an English master. She wrote to Rosemary Verey, requesting an internship. Despite inauspicious beginnings, the women became firm friends.

This then is an account written by a lifelong fan, but it pulls no punches. Verey is revealed as a drinker, a bully, a martinet, a shameless self-promoter and snob. Yet the fact that she numbered among her friends so many of gardening's great and good is testament to her vitality and charm. "It's a sin to be dull," she would say, and she was never that.

Robinson is clear about the limits of Verey's talents. Her strength was in planting, not structure; she never learned to draw; she never claimed to be original. But this only underlines her achievements. She did not come to gardening till her 40s, published her first book when she was 62 and her barnstorming tours of America continued till just months before her death. Robinson is also scrupulous in acknowledging the key part played by Rosemary's husband David in the creation of the Rosemary Verey phenomenon. It was he who introduced her to garden history; he who created the vistas at Barnsley House and imported the architectural features.

Verey claimed to have reintroduced the British to their own garden traditions, and the photogenic English Country House style was very much her creation, though she would have been the first to acknowledge her historical antecedents. But Robinson suggests her more enduring legacy might be in the US, where she encouraged American gardeners to have faith in their own horticultural vernacular. Her writings have fared better than her gardens, and Verey's most important contribution may well be as 'the great encourager', crisply exhorting us all to get outside and get on with it.

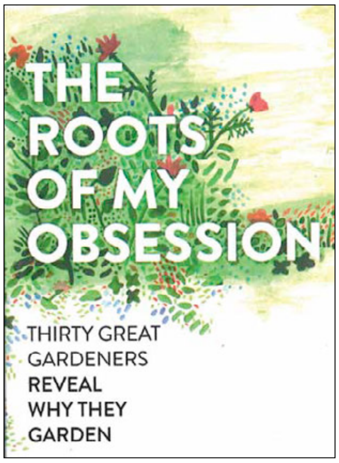
Ambra Edwards is a writer specialising in gardens.

book offer

RRP £24.95. **Reader offer price £22.95** including p&p.

THE ROOTS OF MY OBSESSION edited by Thomas C Cooper

Timber Press, £9.99
ISBN 978-1604692716


THE ROOTS OF MY OBSESSION
THIRTY GREAT GARDENERS REVEAL WHY THEY GARDEN

Why do gardeners garden? Relatives who garden, childhood memories of plants and gardens, or vivid adult encounters with the beauty and magic of plantlife are among the motivations explored in this collection of writings. Around 30 well-known gardeners, mostly American, but some British and Irish, explain their passion in a series of short essays, trying to get to understand its source and convey their love.

My experience of interviewing gardeners in Britain almost inevitably brings trowel-wielding parents, prize-marrow-growing grandparents or other gardening relatives into focus. So, it was enlightening to read that Canadian Thomas Hobbs (famous for his brilliant colour combinations) had no one in his family who gardened; and neither did Tony Avent (renowned for his plantsman nursery in North Carolina, and his outrageous catalogues).

Some writers choose to discuss the childhood origins of their gardening obsession, while others look at what drives them on as adults. This often seems to be more about the processes of gardening, than actual achievements. Page Dickey enthuses about her love of weeding and how this brings her closer to her plants; Nancy Goodwin takes the tack of describing the creation of her garden and the battles she has had with deer, while Anne Raver stresses her love of what she calls the ‘un-garden’ – the spontaneous species that arrive of their own accord yet are worth keeping.

The Roots of My Obsession is a clear example of a genre, as there is a long history of books that explore these very personal experiences of garden-making. Since personalities are key to the concept, it does help if you know who the writer is; many of the names here might not be familiar to non-American readers.

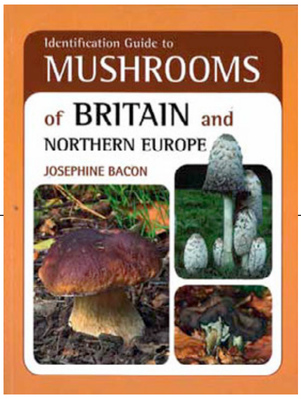
The overall tone is very gentle, which sometimes left me feeling a little unsatisfied; this is not a book for those who like the edgy, the questioning, the critical, or who like their writing as sharp as their secateurs. It is, however, elegiac, emotional and at times confessional.

Noël Kingsbury is a plantsman, designer and writer.

book offer

RRP £9.99. **Reader offer price £8.99** including p&p.

A Garden of Happiness
Penelope Hobhouse



IDENTIFICATION GUIDE TO MUSHROOMS OF BRITAIN AND NORTHERN EUROPE

By Josephine Bacon
John Beaufoy, £10.99
ISBN 978-1906780609

Josephine Bacon’s accessible style takes away some of the fear associated with mushrooming.

After introducing the book with some very useful practical mushrooming advice, each mushroom then fits into one of three sub-sections – edible, inedible and poisonous. To aid accurate identification, each mushroom is illustrated using a full-colour photograph in-situ. This is coupled with possible look-a-likes, details of height, size of cap, how common they might be, habitat, time of year they fruit and in the case of the edible mushrooms, a serving suggestion.

Field-testing Bacon’s book I foraged some sheathed woodtuft and learned that it benefits from a longer cooking time. So, I added it in with a slow-cooked lamb casserole and found it most agreeable. I could have done with that kind of advice a few years ago when I tried a mushroom called the dryad’s saddle. It was like chewing on a horses saddle!

Bacon recommends that you should own two field guides, and I’d say this should be one of them.

Andy Hamilton is an expert on home-grown and wild foods.

book offer

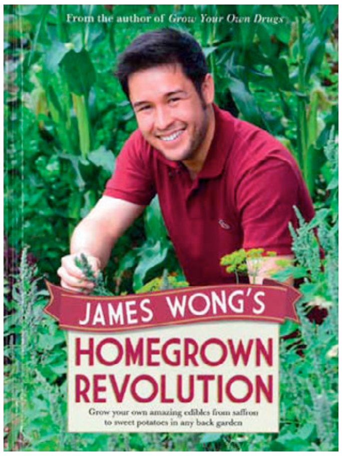
RRP £10.99. **Reader offer price £9.99** including p&p.

Book reviews

JAMES WONG'S HOMEGROWN REVOLUTION

by James Wong

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20
ISBN 978-0297867128


From the author of Grow Your Own Drugs
JAMES WONG'S
HOMEGROWN REVOLUTION
Grow your own amazing edibles from saffron to sweet potatoes in any back garden

Just about the only crop that has flourished over the last few growing seasons is the surfeit of grow-your-own books. Most of them repeat the usual spud, sprout and swede advice that must by now be engraved on every vegetable grower's heart, but James Wong has concentrated on the remaining 2,500 edible plants that will grow here and better reflect our more varied modern diet. As he says, "We don't eat the same stuff we did two generations ago, so why on earth should we be stuck with growing it?"

Working on the premise that it doesn't make economic sense to grow crops that are cheap to buy and widely available, Kew-trained James suggests we turn our trowels to the 120 exotic edibles that he has trialled in his small urban garden, many of which were easier to grow and produced far higher yields than what he calls 'the wartime ration book' range of vegetables. Top of his list of crops: tomatillos – a lime-flavoured tomato-like plant each producing 10kg of fruit; New Zealand spinach – more tasty and productive than regular spinach; delicious mini alpine strawberries, and asparagus peas – foolproof to grow and beautiful to look at.

Did you know that you could eat dahlias, fuchsias and hostas in the form of roots, berries and shoots respectively, as well as fiddlehead fern fronds, daylily buds and bamboo shoots? Not all his suggestions will raise eyebrows, but a kitchen garden packed full of James Wong's recommendations would make a refreshing change.

Each new ingredient is explained carefully with growing, harvesting and eating instructions, followed by tempting recipe ideas. The book is prefixed with the TV botanist's general gardening tips and ends with a suppliers' directory. A workmanlike tome destined for the kitchen workbench rather than the coffee table, packed full of encouragement to take a new look at not just the contents of our vegetable plot but at our gardens as a whole.

Francine Raymond is an author and Sunday Telegraph *columnist.*

book offer

RRP £20. **Reader offer price £18** including p&p.

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GARDEN
A Seasonal Guide to Growing, Cooking and Using Culinary Herbs
Maureen Little

THE KITCHEN HERB GARDEN

by Maureen Little

Spring Hill, £14.99
ISBN 978-1905862894

Many gardeners grow herbs as an afterthought, which is a pity because they can make an otherwise ordinary meal sing. With the seed-catalogue season upon us, this book is an ideal one to help you decide what to order. Maureen Little's style is charming and conversational: this book is very much aimed at beginners. Herbs are sensibly divided into two groups. The first is 'robust herbs', which contain higher concentrations of essential oil in their leaves and thus need longer cooking time, eg rosemary, chervil, and bay. To grow well, they generally need poorer soil.

Her second grouping is what she calls 'delicate herbs'. These are usually annuals, sown and eaten in the same year, such as basil, fennel, sweet cicely, dill etc. These require a slightly richer soil and are best enjoyed raw or with very little cooking.

Included in this book are some very easy recipes to follow. Eton Mess appears as Summer Mess – the only difference being the addition of lemon verbena leaves, which do indeed increase the deliciousness.

My only quibble is that the photographs and design in this high quality, well-written book are a little boring. After all, we garden and cook with our eyes as well as our hands!

Lila Das Gupta is a reporter, producer and journalist.

book offer

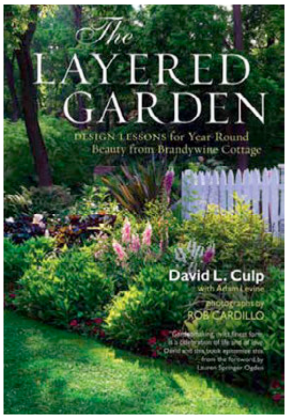
RRP £14.99. **Reader offer price £12.99** including p&p.

THE LAYERED GARDEN

by David L Culp with Adam Levine

Timber Press, £25

ISBN 978-1604692365



'I do hold it in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all months in the year, in which, severally, things of beauty may then be in season.' So said Francis Bacon in 1625, a thought presented at the very front of this book.

Of course, this approach depends on having enough space for plantings around the garden which will be at their peak, one by one, as the months pass. Renowned American plantsman David Culp has enough, two acres at Brandywine Cottage, west of Philadelphia, yet he has gone further and developed a concept that gardeners with far less space will surely appreciate.

His idea of a layered garden involves not only a physical hierarchy of planting to maximise the commitment to beauty from any one area, but also, in the same space, a succession of flowers and foliage from the first glimmers of spring to autumn's fading. Every square inch of garden makes a contribution to the whole.

In a larger space this approach creates a saturated richness of planting in which, at every season, there are plant combinations in a rolling succession of colour and form. It's as if a series of different gardens occupy one space.

In David's revelations of how his plantings are created, his excitement is always bubbling just below the surface of his very readable text. Rob Cardillo's fine photography captures the sweeps of the borders at Brandywine Cottage as well as the intricate detail of individual flowers. British readers should appreciate that the winter climate is much colder than in Britain, but the ideas and approaches are equally valid.

David describes himself as an 'equal-opportunity seeker of the sublime' and says 'my rule for designing a garden is that there are no rules,' an approach that ensures this book is full of ideas to enrich your garden.

Graham Rice is the author of the Transatlantic Gardener blog.

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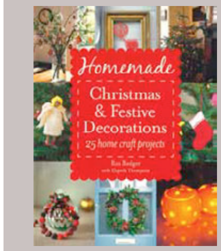

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by Ros Badger

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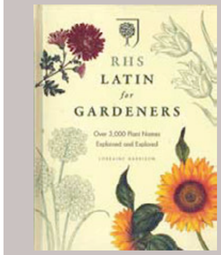

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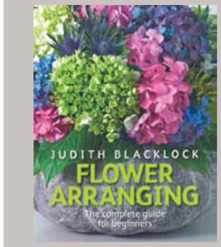

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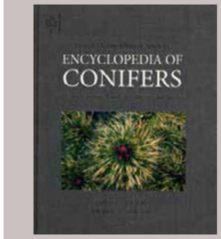

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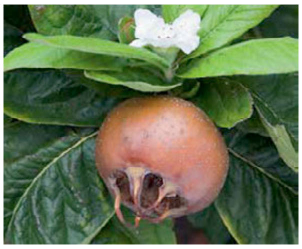

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Offer two

Elm sapling giveaway

THE GREAT BRITISH ELM EXPERI-MENT

With tree planting season upon us, environmental charity the Conservation Foundation is keen to remind us of their 'Great British Elm Experiment', in which they are looking to re-establish healthy British elm trees back into the country. By offering saplings micro propagated from parent trees that appear to have survived Dutch elm disease, the Foundation is hoping that elm guardians will nurture and monitor the health of their saplings, and record their progress over time at www.conservationfoundation.co.uk/elms

SPECIAL GIVEAWAY

The Conservation Foundation is giving away five elm saplings for planting out this winter. If you would like a chance to receive a sapling (worth £26.45), and become a tree guardian, please send your name, telephone number and postal address to GARDENS ILLUSTRATED 191/Elm Project, PO Box 501, Leicester LI94 0AA. Or enter online at www.gardensillustrated.com. **Closing date for entries is 30 November 2012.**

You can find out more about the 'Great British Elm Experiment' and how to take part by going to www.conservationfoundation.co.uk and clicking on the elm logo. Schools and community groups are eligible for a free sapling and others have the opportunity to buy one. You can also email elms@conservationfoundation.co.uk.

Terms and Conditions: 1 The Promoter is Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited. 2 The promotion is open to UK residents (including the Channel Islands) aged 18 years or older, except the Promoter's employees or contractors and anyone connected with the promotion and their direct family members. 3 The closing date for entries is 11.59pm on 30 November 2012. 4 To enter send details of your name, address and contact details to Gardens Illustrated 191/Elm Project, PO Box 501, Leicester LI94 0AA. Or enter online at www.gardensillustrated.com. 5 Only one entry will be permitted per person, regardless of method of entry. Bulk entries made by third parties will not be permitted. 6 There are five prizes available; each of one elm sapling. 7. The winning entrants will be the first five names drawn at random from all the entries after the closing date. The Promoter's decision as to the winners is final and no correspondence relating to the promotion will be entered into. The winners will be notified within 30 days of the close of the promotion by post/telephone/email. 9 There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Prizes must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. The Promoter reserves the right to substitute the prize with one of the same or greater value. 10 Full terms and conditions apply and can be found at ww.gardensillustrated.com.

WIRE CLOCHE IMAGE BY SEAN MALYON; POTS IMAGE BY RACHEL WARNE

Offer three

Crocus 15% discount

Online plant retailer Crocus is offering readers a 15% discount across their range this month*. You could choose to buy these attractive wire cloches to protect your crops, as seen in Shop Front on page 27, or the galvanised metal and glass growhouses we also featured. See www.crocus.co.uk for the full range of products.

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Order online Go to www.crocus.co.uk to select your items. Discount will be applied at checkout stage. Enter the code **9556** when prompted.

Order hotline Call 0844 557 2266 to place your order, quoting the code when asked.

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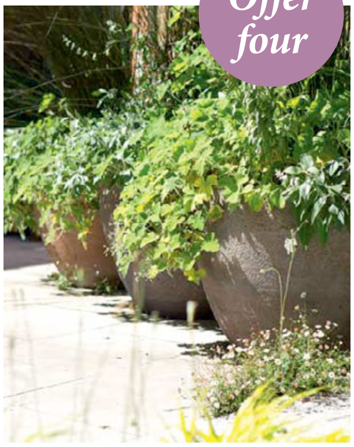
* Offer excludes delivery of £5.95 per order. Delivery to mainland UK only, excluding northern Scotland. Offer valid for the featured cloche and cold frames as well as plants and products. However furniture, machinery, cut flowers, Christmas trees and gift vouchers are excluded. Offer closes 10 December 2012. All items are subject to availability.

Red Mud Hut 15% discount

Offer four



Courtyard gardens lend themselves to using containers for plants, water features or focal points. Dan Pearson's studio courtyard (page 32) uses three sand-blasted pots to good effect, blending the colour of the pots with the stonework. Supplier Red Mud Hut is offering readers a 15% discount across their range of hand-produced pots and containers, including the sand-blasted pots. For details of Red Mud Huts range go to www.theredmudhut.co.uk

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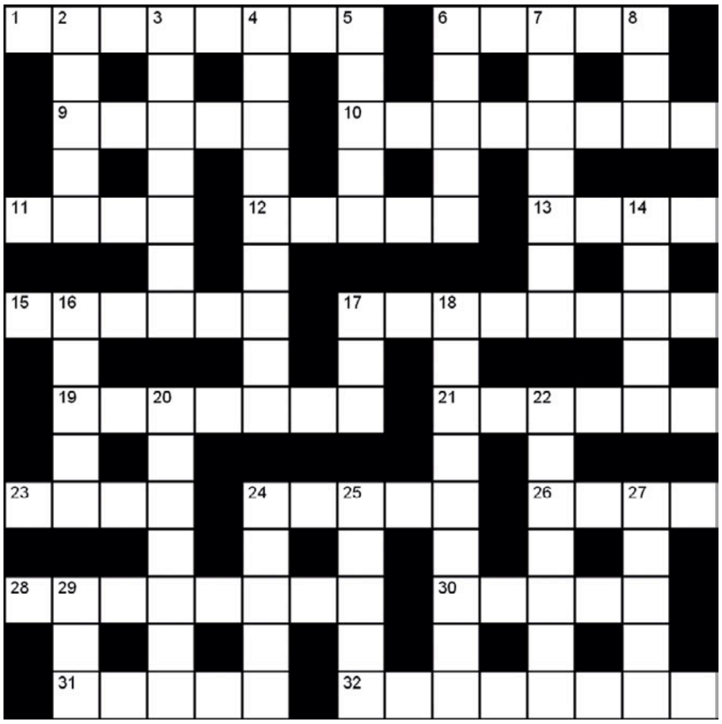
Crossword



ACROSS

1 Sweetly perfumed (graft ran unrestrained) (8)
6 The art of ikebana originated here (5)
9 Leaf with flower in its axil – pesky child grabs end of lilac (5)
10 Produced by eg a mixture of formal and informal planting (8)
11 See 30ac.
12 Having a covering of rootless plants – partly 'Cosmos' Syringa (5)
13 Descriptive of fruits such as raspberries (4)
15 Dogwood genus noted for colourful winter stems (6)
17 Jim, gardener at West Dean, Sussex (8)
19 Part of plant producing sugary substance – makes yarn, etc (7)
21 With a 'Naked Lady' they appear after flowering (6)
23 Swiss chard genus – part hebe, tansy! (4)
24 __ Wain, West Dean gardener, and better half of 17ac! (5)
26 Cheese found ... in ripe damsons (4)
28 Disease affecting leeks – colourless clue! (5,3)
30/11 Sort of patio, prominently featured in this issue (9)
31 Briefly, county location of Iford Manor (5)
32 People who go on and on about climbing plants? (8)

DOWN

2 The madder genus in shrub I arranged (5)
3 Another name for *Iris foetidissima* – and gold, perhaps (7)
4 Genus that includes tarragon (Aster family) – Maria ties in knots! (9)
5 Blood-sucking mites' correct markings? (5)
6 Female ass and dwarf Michaelmas daisy at Picton Gardens! (5)
7 Type of edible mushroom – and sunshade (7)
8 Charity for which gardens open... in Godalming, Surrey! (3)
14 Eg a wooden garden boundary – criminal type (5)
16 Small weight once including top of umbellifer (5)
17 The laurel tree (3)
18 The autumn crocus, profiled this month (9)
20 A good situation for thrift (7)
22 Such plant reproduction involves only stolons, spores etc (7)
24 Paving material made by badgers? (5)
25 More mature (5)
27 Picton Gardens has a national collection of this autumn flowering plant (5)
29 Fruit of the *Craetagus* tree (3)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

CORRECTION: UNFORTUNATELY WE MISSED OUT THE CLUE TO 17 ACROSS IN LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD. THE ANSWER IS BELOW BUT FOR THOSE INTERESTED, IT WAS
17 Open to the elements, seed pox developed (7)

OCTOBER'S SOLUTIONS
ACROSS
5 Beans **7** Anemones **10** Oxheart **11** Outdoor **12** Idaho **14** Ria **15** Tulip **17** Exposed **19** Pimento **21** Stems **23** Eon **25** Nyssa **26** Tetanus **28** Martini **30** Heeled in **31** Scion.
DOWN
1 Path **2** Carter **3** Tomtit **4** Peto **5** Biodiversity **6** Seasons **8** Exocarp **9** Crop rotation **13** Apple **16** Lincs **18** Dressed **20** Manures **22** Single **24** Nymans **27** Tied **29** Iris.

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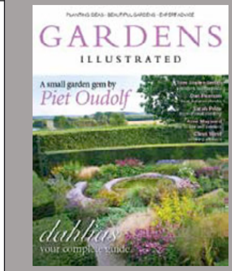
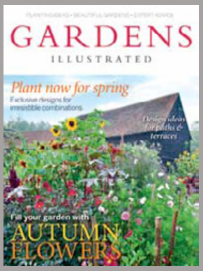


SEPTEMBER 2012
Piet Oudolf's small garden gem; best dahlia selection; Tom Stuart-Smith family garden; autumn shrubs; how to use self-seeders; allotment recipes



OCTOBER 2012
Spring planting; design ideas for paths and terraces; the Pothole Gardener; Japanese anemones; West Dean's walled garden; fruit expertise at RHS Wisley

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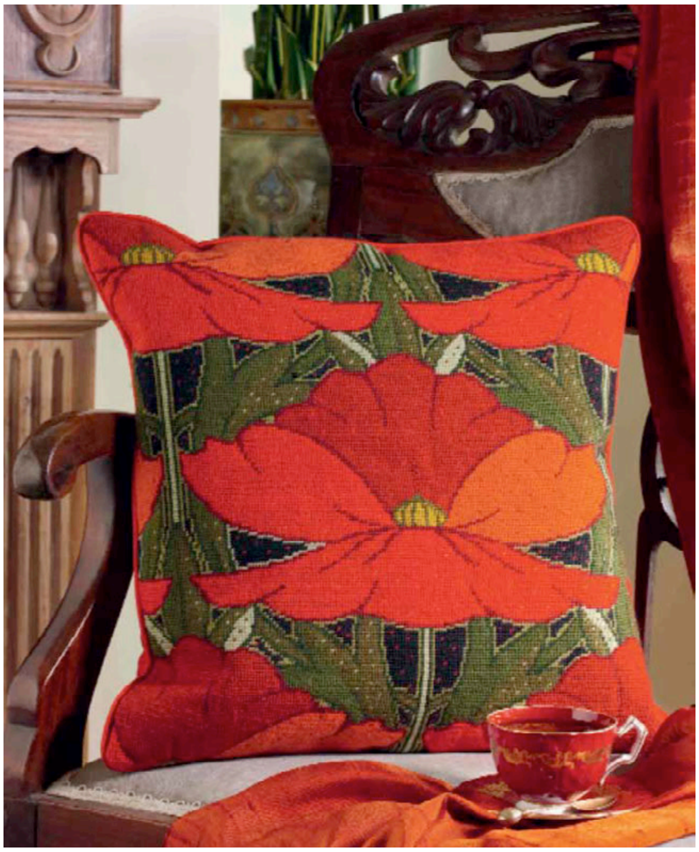

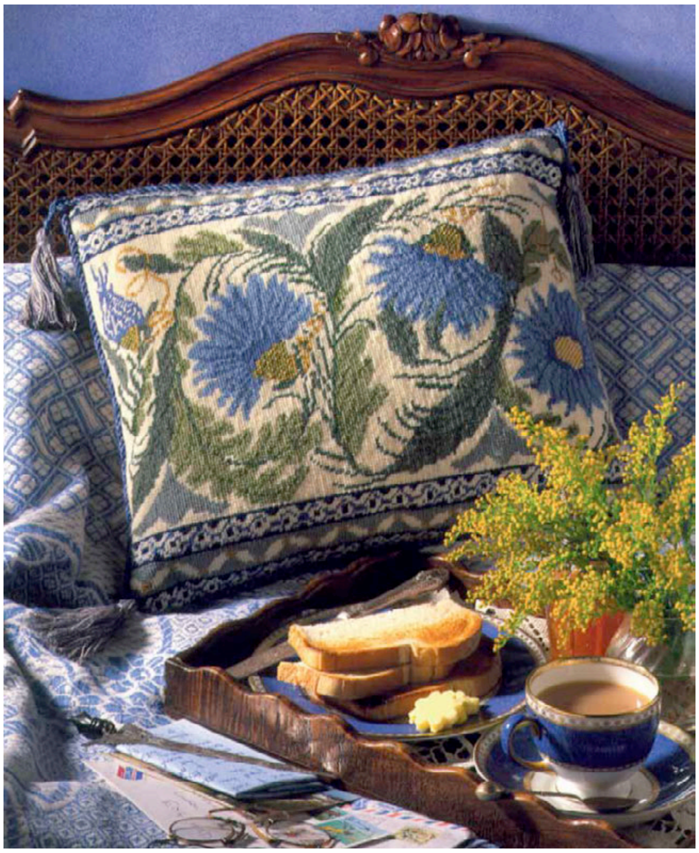

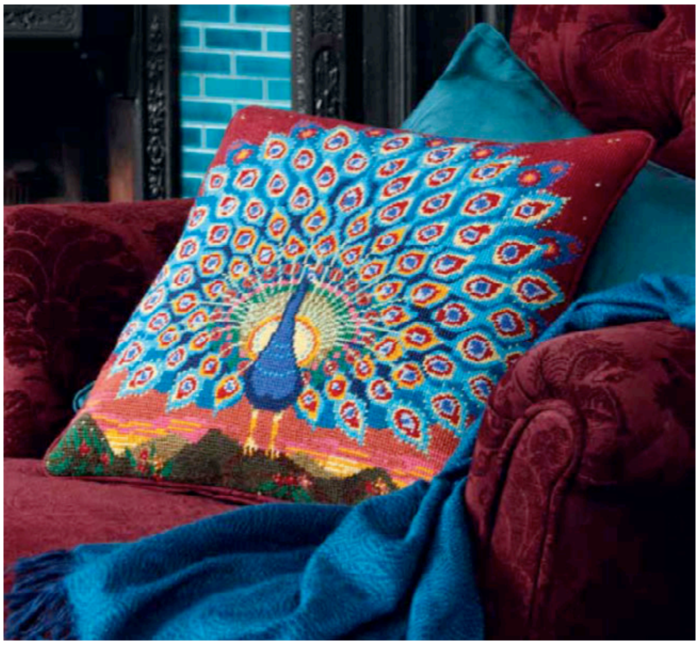

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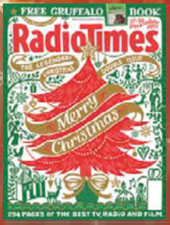
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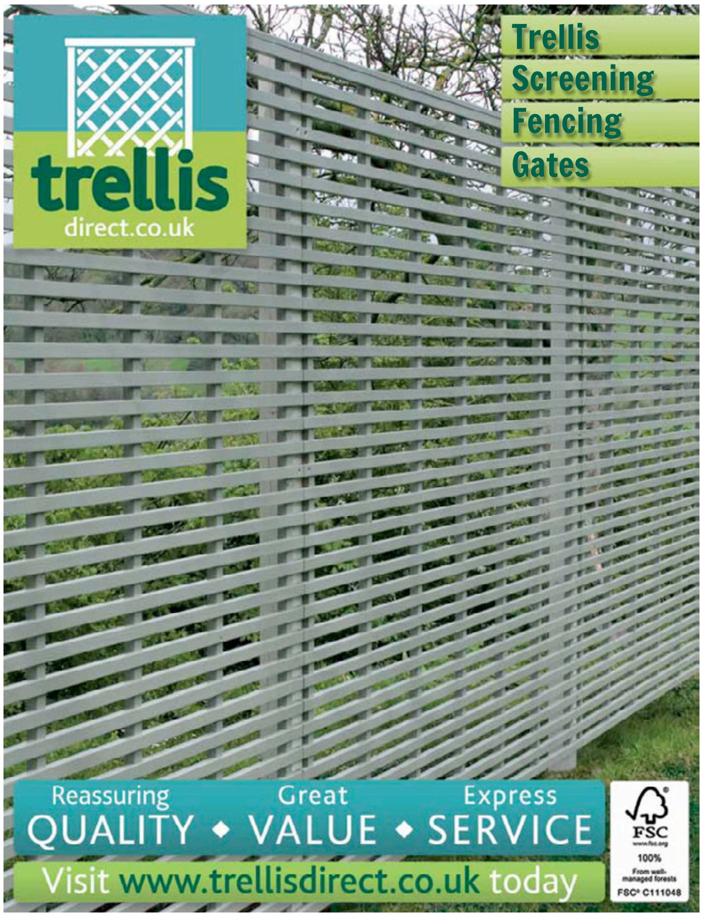

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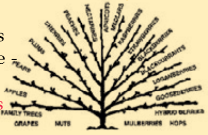

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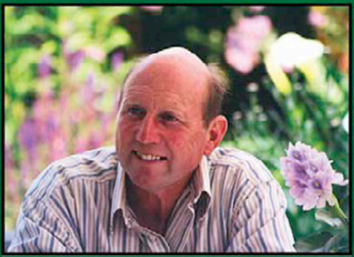

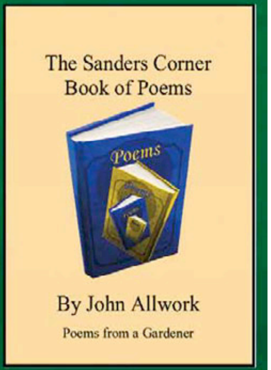

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JASON INGRAM

Cruel to be kind

Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire

After a rainy summer that has encouraged growth, our columnist's thoughts turn to pruning

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **ANGELA HARDING**

It will be a good winter for those of us who enjoy pruning. Consistent rain throughout the summer has promoted an extraordinary growth. Some shrubs are now twice what they were last year and small trees are outgrowing their adjective. Hedges that were cut early look as though they have suffered two years of neglect. Some of the lesser roads around here had almost vanished by August; adolescent branches squeaking against the windows both sides of the car in places.

All summer the more vigilant of us have been limbing up, and excising branches that impede our view or walking, without a thought of what lies beneath the fleshy dress. As the leaves come off so, one by one, woody elements are exposed in true form. Now the pruning can take a serious turn: surgery that is no longer merely cosmetic; we can get to the heart of the matter and prune for health and vigour and longevity.

Nearly 30 years ago, buying a shrub for the first time, I naively asked the assistant how I should prune my purchase (it was an acer, which shows quite how naive I was). The nursery being in Earl's Court he, naturally, was Australian, and cheerfully advised me to "Just close your eyes and go for it mate."

Even I even then could see some flaw in that system. My pruning experience at the time was limited to roses and apples and the occasional commissioned massacre. I was popular among friends and relations with overgrown wisterias because I didn't mind heights and was more inclined to take off too much than too little. I knew something of what and where to cut from puzzling over those ubiquitous diagrams. What I was beginning to realise was that I needed to know why.

You could, I suppose, learn by heart every plant in horticulture and when it should be pruned and by how much. Or you could use a small fraction of that intellectual effort to understand why you are pruning at all, so that you can, by looking correctly at any plant, know what it needs and when and what it will tolerate when it comes to the blade.

We say, when we are doing it properly, that we are pruning for the benefit of the plant. As though no plant in the wild was ever healthy, vigorous or long-lived. But a quick glance at any wilderness will show decay and lassitude and early mortality in every scene. We prune because we want each plant to be giving its best performance, not just the ones with a natural advantage. We prune well because we want our interference to cause no disadvantage.

Angela Harding

> *"We want to find the fine point where the plant's capabilities can meet our expectations"*

If it were only a case of pure aesthetics and containment, the methods could be as subjective and unscientific as the motives. If a branch offends thee, lop it off. We want to be a little more intelligent than that. We want to consider how the plant grows and how it will respond to our lopping. To find the fine point where the plant's capabilities can meet our expectations.

A crowded plant will make new growth on the outside, which is wasting our precious space. We want to be encouraging renewal from the centre. A leggy plant will flower at the top, leaving us staring at nothing but stems. Crossing branches, dead wood and stagnant air will encourage disease and rot. A timid snipping is a waste of time while a massacre, on the other hand, if not fatal, may leave an unsightly invalid with a long recovery time.

So the advice is the opposite of what the Australian said. Open your eyes and be circumspect. Look hard to see what is dead, what is weak and what is redundant. Look harder to see whether the plant will flower on new or old growth. You can never look well enough nor reconsider often enough when pruning. Each plant becomes a test of the intellect, and that is where the pleasure comes. □

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